

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2516

As Reported by House Committee On:
Health Care & Wellness

Title: An act relating to scoliosis screening in schools.

Brief Description: Eliminating requirements for scoliosis screening in schools.

Sponsors: Representatives Green, Roberts, Schual-Berke and Loomis.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Health Care & Wellness: 1/23/08, 1/30/08 [DP].

<p>Brief Summary of Bill</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Removes requirements to screen students in public schools for scoliosis.
--

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH CARE & WELLNESS

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 11 members: Representatives Cody, Chair; Morrell, Vice Chair; Hinkle, Ranking Minority Member; Alexander, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Barlow, Condotta, Green, Moeller, Pedersen, Schual-Berke and Seaquist.

Staff: Chris Blake (786-7392).

Background:

Scoliosis is a condition in which the spine curves away from the center of the body. Treatment, when necessary, may include the use of a brace to straighten the spine or, in severe cases, surgery to correct the curve and fuse the bones together.

The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction is directed to require scoliosis screening for students in public schools at least three times between fourth and eleventh grades. According to standards established by the State Board of Health, the screenings must occur annually in fifth, seventh, and ninth grades. The procedures used must be consistent with the standards of the American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons. Parents or guardians of any student suspected of having scoliosis must be notified of the screening results and be provided information about scoliosis and treatment services available from health care providers.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

In the 2004-05 school year, 148,813 students were screened for scoliosis in Washington. The screening program resulted in referrals to a health care provider for 3.39 percent of the screened students with .02 percent of those students receiving a brace or surgery.

Summary of Bill:

Legislative findings are made relating to shortages of school health personnel and the increased responsibilities of planning and delivery of school health services. In addition, the findings state that the diagnosis and treatment are most appropriately managed through a primary care provider rather than schools.

The scoliosis screening program for public school students is repealed.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) Students have increasing health demands and nurses do not have time to screen for scoliosis which is neither educationally relevant, nor supported by evidence-based research. Scoliosis has a low prevalence. Scoliosis is the school nurse task with the fewest beneficial outcomes. The cost-benefits of performing scoliosis screening have not been well documented. Scoliosis screening is an intrusion on the child's privacy. There are other avenues in the community for addressing scoliosis screening rather than the school setting. Scoliosis screenings interrupt the academic day.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Representative Green, prime sponsor; Wendy Jones, Educational Service District 114; Kit Song, Children's Hospital, Seattle; Shirley Carstens, School Nurse Organization of Washington; and Gayle Thronson, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.