

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## HB 1750

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As Reported by Senate Committee On:  
State Government & Elections, March 24, 2023

**Title:** An act relating to establishing Yori's law to promote education around water safety and drowning prevention.

**Brief Description:** Promoting water safety education.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Berg, Reed, Taylor, Cortes, Street, Ramel, Leavitt, Kloba, Tharinger, Fosse, Gregerson, Stonier, Entenman, Reeves, Slatter, Donaghy, Santos, Hackney, Morgan, Timmons, Ormsby, Orwall, Callan, Duerr, Berry, Davis, Chapman, Abbarno, Thai, Senn, Alvarado, Walen, Rule, Doglio, Ryu and Pollet.

**Brief History:** Passed House: 3/8/23, 96-0.

**Committee Activity:** State Government & Elections: 3/24/23, 3/24/23 [DP].

### Brief Summary of Bill

- Establishes May 15th as Water Safety Day.
- Encourages individuals working with children to provide water safety training and resources to the children and their families.

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## SENATE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT & ELECTIONS

**Majority Report:** Do pass.

Signed by Senators Hunt, Chair; Valdez, Vice Chair; Wilson, J., Ranking Member; Dozier, Fortunato, Hasegawa and Kuderer.

**Staff:** Megan Tudor (786-7478)

**Background:** Unintentional Injury—Drowning. In the United States, drowning is the leading cause of death for children ages 1 to 4 and is the second leading cause of death for

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children 5 to 14 years of age. There are multiple factors that increase the likelihood of drowning including swimming capability, unsupervised access to bodies of water, and not wearing a life jacket during water activities. Rates of drowning fatality vary by sex and race or ethnicity, with male children and children from communities of color at significantly higher risk. A notable barrier to better water safety and knowledge is family income level, with nearly 80 percent of children from lower income families reporting limited or no swimming ability.

Water Safety. May is designated as National Water Safety Month. The State Drowning Prevention Network was developed and is led by various state and local agencies to prevent drowning by hosting water safety events and trainings. Water competency is the ability to anticipate, avoid, and survive common drowning situations. There are three main components of water competency; water-safety awareness, basic swim skills, and the ability to recognize and respond to a swimmer in trouble. Critical layers of protection against drowning are categorized by physical environment, equipment, and personal strategies such as barriers, equipment, and close supervision.

**Summary of Bill:** The Legislature recognizes May 15th as Water Safety Day. Individuals working with children ages 18 and under are encouraged to provide training, educational materials, and other resources to the children and their families around water safety, water rescue, and drowning prevention, including a list of locations caregivers can access swimming lessons for their children. The act is named Yori's Law.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members:** No.

**Effective Date:** Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:** PRO: Drowning is the number 1 cause of death for children ages 1-4 and is a preventable tragedy. 88% of drownings occur when there is at least one parent supervising. Minority children are more likely to not have access to swim lessons. This bill is not a mandate, but it does designate May 15th as water safety day—chosen for its proximity to memorial day. Memorial day kicks off a period when drowning deaths increase, especially for children. This bill focuses on encouraging adults that deal with young people to provide educational materials and training on water safety.

Swimming is a life skill and there is more to be done to increase access to community pools and building more community pools. Washington is surrounded by water and this bill is a step toward making the state water-safe. The unanimous passage from the house is evidence of the importance of this bill. Part of the YMCA strategic plan is to reduce and eliminate drowning in King County because of the understanding of the vast disparities and inequities

related to water safety and drowning prevention education.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Representative April Berg, Prime Sponsor; Anthony (Tony) Gomez; Kyle Kamman, YMCA of Greater Seattle; Chezik Tsunoda, No More Under.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:** No one.