

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## HB 1159

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*As Reported By House Committee on:  
Education*

**Title:** An act relating to corporal punishment.

**Brief Description:** Requiring the adoption of a policy prohibiting corporal punishment in schools.

**Sponsor(s):** Representatives Cole, Leonard, Roland, Jacobsen, Rust, Prentice, Ebersole, Phillips, Holland, Scott, R. Fisher, Fraser, Jones, Pruitt, Franklin, Brekke, Sprenkle, R. King, Wood, Basich, Wang, Spanel, Belcher, H. Myers, Appelwick, Orr, Beck, Braddock, Horn, Dellwo, R. Johnson, Morris, Nelson, Miller, Wineberry and Anderson.

**Brief History:**

Reported by House Committee on:  
Education, February 6, 1991, DP.

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**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON  
EDUCATION**

**Majority Report:** *Do pass.* Signed by 13 members: Representatives Peery, Chair; Betrozoff; Broback; Cole; Dorn; Holland; Jones; Orr; Phillips; Rasmussen; Roland; H. Sommers; and Valle.

**Minority Report:** *Do not pass.* Signed by 5 members: Representatives Brough, Ranking Minority Member; Vance, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Brumsickle; P. Johnson; and Neher.

**Staff:** Bob Butts (786-7111).

**Background:** School districts are authorized by state statute and the State Board of Education to utilize corporal punishment to discipline children as long as parents/guardians are notified in advance, an authorized witness is present, excessive or cruel and unusual punishment is not used, and the child is not punished in front of anyone other than the witness.

**Summary of Bill:** The State Board of Education, in consultation with the Superintendent of Public Instruction, shall develop and adopt a policy prohibiting the use of corporal punishment in the schools. The policy shall be

adopted by the State Board of Education no later than December 1, 1991, and shall take effect in all school districts no later than September 1, 1992.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

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

**Testimony For:** Research has shown that spanking of children is not effective, and that it seriously undermines self-esteem. All industrial countries in the world have banned corporal punishment, except South Africa and the United States.

**Testimony Against:** It is very hard to believe that prudent paddling will hurt a child. Corporal punishment is an effective deterrent, especially in cases of utter defiance of authority. Please do not tie the hands of teachers. The use of corporal punishment should be a decision made at the local level.

**Witnesses:** Ann Olson, Parent Teacher Association (in favor); Karen Hulbert, Children's Alliance (in favor); Esther Milligan (opposed); Zorka Fowler (opposed); Tim Hitson (opposed); Bob Maier, Washington Education Association (in favor); Marcia Costello, Superintendent of Public Instruction (in favor); Dwayne Slate, Washington State School Directors' Association (opposed, should be local decision); and Walter Ball, Washington School Principals Association (opposed, should be a local decision).