

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5240

AS REPORTED BY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, FEBRUARY 21, 1991

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

**SPONSORS:** Senators Bailey, Rinehart, Pelz, Murray and Niemi.

**SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION**

**Majority Report:** Do pass.

Signed by Senators Bailey, Chairman; Murray, Pelz, Rinehart, A. Smith, and Talmadge.

**Staff:** Leslie Goldstein (786-7424)

**Hearing Dates:** February 13, 1991; February 21, 1991

**BACKGROUND:**

Corporal punishment in the schools has been a frequently debated issue in recent years. According to a 1989 study by the National PTA, corporal punishment in the schools has been expressly prohibited in the District of Columbia and 19 states including Alaska, California, Connecticut, Hawaii, Iowa, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, Mississippi, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Dakota, Oregon, Rhode Island, Vermont, Virginia, and Wisconsin. As of 1989, the other 31 states did not have such legislation.

**SUMMARY:**

By December 1, 1991, the State Board of Education is required to adopt a policy prohibiting the use of corporal punishment in the schools. The policy shall be implemented by school districts by September 1, 1992.

**Appropriation:** none

**Revenue:** none

**Fiscal Note:** none requested

**TESTIMONY FOR:**

Corporal punishment has been outlawed in the military, prisons and in marriage. It should not be permitted in our schools. Children should be schooled in a nonviolent atmosphere that emphasizes fairness and mutual respect. Children should not be hit.

**TESTIMONY AGAINST:**

Corporal punishment, used with discretion, causes a healthy fear and respect in children. When properly used, corporal punishment is an effective method of discipline. This should be a decision left to local school districts and parents.

**TESTIFIED:** PRO: Bob Shabot and Ann Olson, Washington State Parent-Teacher Association; Ruth Harms, Washington Council for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect; Gary Shaeffer, citizen; Toni Taber; Monica Schmidt, State Board of Education; Marcia Costello, SPI; CON: Esther Milligan, Woodland School District teacher; Scott Staley, Council for Responsible Government; Jeanyce Derby