

# FINAL BILL REPORT

## SHB 1366

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Synopsis as Enacted

**Brief Description:** Requiring video game retailers to inform consumers about video game rating systems.

**Sponsors:** By House Committee on Juvenile Justice & Family Law (originally sponsored by Representatives Roberts, McDonald, B. Sullivan, Dickerson, Morrell, Skinner, Appleton, Hinkle, Moeller, Hasegawa, McCune, Sells, Walsh, Ormsby, Kenney, Kagi and McDermott).

**House Committee on Juvenile Justice & Family Law**  
**Senate Committee on Human Services & Corrections**

### **Background:**

Video games may include store-bought games, computer games downloaded from the internet, and hand-held game players. Since their inception, video games have become increasingly realistic and interactive. The subject matter of the video games varies greatly, ranging from animated and educational games for children to more sophisticated action games. Some video games have been criticized for their use of violence.

Video games are rated by the Entertainment Software Rating Board (ESRB). The ESRB is an independent, self-regulatory entity supported by the entertainment industry, which provides ratings for software titles, websites, and on-line games. The ratings are located on the front of the game packaging. There are six ratings: "Early Childhood," "Everyone," "Teen," "Mature," "Adults Only," and "Rating Pending."

According to the rating system, games rated "Early Childhood" and "Everyone" are suitable for younger audiences. "Teen" rated games contain content that may be suitable for persons ages 13 and older. A rating of "Mature" indicates that the content may be suitable for persons age 17 and older. "Mature" rated games may include more intense violence, language, or mature sexual themes than the "Teen" rated games. A title rated "Adults Only" has content suitable only for adults and is not intended for persons under the age of 18; the game may include graphic depictions of sex or violence.

### **Summary:**

Video game retailers are required to post signs providing information to consumers about the existence of a nationally recognized video game rating system, or notifying the consumers that such a system exists.

The signs must be placed in prominent locations near the video game displays and points of sale. The signs and lettering must be clearly visible to consumers.

The retailer is required to provide information explaining the rating system to any person who requests the information.

**Votes on Final Passage:**

House	95	3	
Senate	46	0	(Senate amended)
House			(House refused to concur)
Senate			(Senate receded)
Senate	45	0	

**Effective:** July 24, 2005