
**Health Care & Wellness
Committee**

ESB 6305

Brief Description: Concerning the department of health's application for federal funding for the prevention of teen pregnancy.

Sponsors: Senators Kohl-Welles, Keiser, Fairley, Regala, Kline, McDermott, Murray and Tom.

Brief Summary of Engrossed Bill

- Allows, instead of requires, the Department of Health to apply for certain federal funding for abstinence education for adolescents.

Hearing Date: 2/20/08

Staff: Chris Cordes (786-7103).

Background:

As part of federal welfare reform, adopted in the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, \$50 million in funds are made available annually to the states to be used exclusively for abstinence education for adolescents. The states request the funding based on a statutory formula related to the number of low-income children in the state. The states must match every \$4 of federal funds with \$3 dollars of state funds. Forty-three states, including Washington, received funding in 2007, according to the Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Washington welfare reform enacted in response to the federal law includes a statute directing the Department of Health (DOH) to maximize federal funding for abstinence education programs by making timely application for these federal funds. The DOH was also directed to contract with entities qualified to provide abstinence education.

Federal law defines abstinence education as an educational or motivational program that:

- has as its exclusive purpose, teaching the social, psychological, and health gains of abstaining from sexual activity;

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- teaches abstinence from sexual activity outside marriage as the expected standard for all school age children;
- teaches that abstinence from sexual activity is the only certain way to avoid out-of-wedlock pregnancy, sexually transmitted disease, and other associated health problems;
- teaches that a mutually faithful monogamous relationship within marriage is the expected standard of human sexual activity;
- teaches that sexual activity outside marriage is likely to have harmful psychological and physical effects;
- teaches that bearing children out-of-wedlock is likely to have harmful consequences for the child, the child's parents, and society;
- teaches young people how to reject sexual advances; and
- teaches the importance of attaining self-sufficiency before engaging in sexual activity.

Summary of Bill:

The requirement related to maximizing federal funding for abstinence education programs is modified. The DOH may, but is not required, to apply for abstinence education funds through Title V Maternal and Child Health block grants made available under the federal Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996.

The DOH must identify community-based programs that are qualified to provide abstinence programs meeting federal requirements. If federal funding is granted, the DOH must contract with community-based entities to provide abstinence education.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available for SB 6305.

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