

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2100

As Reported by House Committee On:
Early Learning & Human Services

Title: An act relating to health and safety requirements for child care programs that serve school-age children.

Brief Description: Concerning health and safety requirements for child care programs that serve school-age children.

Sponsors: Representatives Kagi, Walsh and Santos.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Early Learning & Human Services: 2/18/15, 2/20/15 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Prohibits the Director of the Department of Early Learning from adopting health and safety requirements for child care programs that serve school-age children and are operated in buildings that contain public or private schools that are more restrictive than those standards established by the Department of Health.
- Exempts child care programs that serve school-age children and are operated in buildings that contain public or private schools from the prohibition on the use of window blinds with pull cords.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & HUMAN SERVICES

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 8 members: Representatives Kagi, Chair; Walkinshaw, Vice Chair; Walsh, Ranking Minority Member; Hawkins, Kilduff, Ortiz-Self, Sawyer and Senn.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 3 members: Representatives Scott, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Dent and McCaslin.

Staff: Ashley Paintner (786-7120).

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Background:Health and Safety Regulations.

The Department of Early Learning (DEL) is responsible for establishing the minimum child care licensing requirements related to the safety of child care premises. Licensed child care providers must maintain the building, equipment, and premises in a safe manner to protect children from injury. The Department of Health (DOH) is responsible for establishing the minimum environmental standards for educational facilities. Before- and after-school programs that serve school-age children in educational facilities must meet the licensing requirements established by the DEL.

Window Blind Pull Cords.

In 2007 the Legislature passed Substitute House Bill 1256 requiring the DEL to adopt licensing standards that prohibit the use of window blinds with cords capable of forming a loop and posing a risk of strangulation to young children in licensed child care facilities. Window blinds and other covering manufactured or properly retrofitted for safety are allowed.

Summary of Bill:

The Director of the DEL is prohibited from adopting health and safety requirements that impose more restrictive requirements for child care programs that serve school-age children and are operated in buildings that contain public or private schools than the standards established by the DOH. Additionally, child care programs that serve school-age children and are operated in buildings that contain public or private schools are exempt from the prohibition on the use of window blinds with pull cords or inner cords.

Appropriation: None.**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.**Effective Date:** The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:**

(In support) Kids who are school-age and go to school all day in a school building are subject to different standards when they attend a program that operates after the school day adjourns. After-school programs have been forced to make changes to the environment despite the children being served safely all day during school hours. These changes include purchasing blinds for the school that meet the DEL regulations, adapting playground equipment, and other modifications. This bill removes the additional health and safety requirements for programs that are operating in the same space as a school and serving school-age children.

This bill recognizes that before- and after-school programs are operating in the same space that safely serves children during the school day hours. This bill directs that in this specific health and safety area, if the regulations make sense during the school day, they should also be applied after school and in the summer. Despite efforts to resolve the conflicting regulations, the DEL and the fire marshal still require significant changes to the building for after-school programs to operate in public and private schools. The reality is that families in Washington need access to before- and after-school programs and those programs should not be restricted by additional regulations when they operate in a public or private school. This bill clarifies some of the concerns that private schools have when they allow organizations to run after-school programs in their building.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Kagi, prime sponsor; David Beard, School's Out Washington; Josh Sutton, Young Men's Christian Association of Greater Seattle; and Suzie Has, United Families International Schools.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.