

HB

259

Alaska State Legislature

House of Representatives

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Representative Harry Crawford District 22

Memorandum

TO: Representative Fred Dyson,
Chair House Health, Education, and Social Services

FROM: Representative Harry T. Crawford, Jr.

DATE: March 4, 2002

RE: HB 259 Public School Scoliosis Exam

I respectfully request that this bill be scheduled for a hearing in your committee. All the pertinent backup materials requested are attached.

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SPONSOR STATEMENT

HB 259 – PUBLIC SCHOOL SCOLIOSIS EXAM

HB 259 legislation that would establish a program to screen for scoliosis for all students in grades 6 through 10. The bill outlines that the screening may be done by a health care provider, a person who has completed a training program such as a gym teacher, or if necessary a parent or guardian.

I introduced this legislation because early detection is the only defense. This legislation may only touch a few people, but for those it does, it will make an enormous difference.

Scoliosis is a progressive disease affecting the spine. It causes a sideward curvature of the back. Adolescent idiopathic scoliosis is the most common form and occurs between the ages of 10 and 13 and most commonly in girls.

Nearly half a million adolescents have spine curvature problems. The earlier it is detected the better chance a person has to correct the problem. When detected in time the progression of smaller curves can be stopped with exercise and wearing a corrective brace. However, failing to detect this disease could result in dangerous surgery, in which steel rods are used to help straighten the spine.

Currently, 22 states are checking for scoliosis. In the State of Alaska, students who participate in sports are checked for scoliosis as part of their physical exam. However we have failed to check the remainder of Alaska's children.

Early and timely detection of curvature of the spine is absolutely mandatory, and this bill goes a long way towards making that possible.

I ask for your support.

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Sectional Analysis

Section 1 (16) establishes a program to detect scoliosis in students. States that a person who does the screening will be a health care provider or someone who has undergone training to screen for scoliosis.

Section 3 (5) requires all school-aged children in grades 6 and 10 to be screened for scoliosis.