



**House
Legislative
Analysis
Section**

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AIDS EDUCATION FOR SCHOOLTEACHERS

House Bill 5188 (Substitute H-3)
First Analysis (5-10-88)

RECEIVED
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Sponsor: Rep. Teola Hunter
First Committee: Education
Second Committee: Public Health

Mich. State Law Library

THE APPARENT PROBLEM:

Public Act 185 of 1987 amended the School Code to require that all state public schools provide instruction on the principal modes by which dangerous communicable diseases, including Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS), are spread. The act, however, did not require that a school district provide qualified instructors, facilities or equipment for AIDS education. It is felt that, in order to be prepared and qualified for the responsibilities required by the act, school staff should be properly trained and guidelines established to standardize the quality of instruction and the expertise of the instructors.

THE CONTENT OF THE BILL:

The bill would amend the School Code to require that those who teach about AIDS to K-12 students have training in "Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome Education for Young People." Under the bill, the state board, in cooperation with the Department of Public Health, would be required to provide trainers for these teachers, and to develop and distribute to school districts material on the teaching about AIDS to young people. The bill would also require that the choice of curricula to be used for AIDS education be approved by the local school board before its use in the school setting.

MCL 380.1169

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS:

According to the Department of Education, the bill would result in costs to the department for staff to develop and distribute AIDS educational materials to school districts, and for printing and mailing expenses. In addition, the department says that local districts would experience costs in providing training for teachers and providing substitute teachers to replace those being trained. No specific estimates of costs are available. (5-10-88)

ARGUMENTS:

For:

Just five years ago, the term AIDS was familiar to only a handful of researchers and medical practitioners. Today, the term has become synonymous with fear and despair, and AIDS is seen as a threat to the entire nation. AIDS is transmitted through intimate sexual contact, blood transfusions, or the sharing of hypodermic needles. The disease attacks the body's immune system and always is fatal. Although AIDS is receiving an increasing amount of public attention, there is concern by some people about the public's lack of understanding on how the disease is spread. In the absence of a vaccine or cure, some people believe, education is the best weapon to curb the

epidemic's growth. A statewide poll conducted by the State Board of Education in April, 1987, concluded that 90 percent of Michigan residents believe public school students should be taught the dangers of AIDS, and about 75 percent said teachers should be allowed to discuss the use of condoms as a way to prevent the spread of the disease. Results of the poll also showed that 60 percent of the state's residents believe AIDS education should begin at the junior high level; 23 percent believe it should begin at the fifth or sixth grade level; and only nine percent felt AIDS education should be delayed until high school. Because of the essential nature of AIDS education and growing public demand for it, it is imperative that those who teach young people about the prevention of the disease be properly trained and equipped with adequate instructional materials. The State Board of Education, in cooperation with the Department of Public Health, should assume leadership in this capacity to ensure thorough and uniform AIDS instruction in the state's public schools.

Against:

Despite the importance of AIDS education, attempts by the state to establish and mandate curriculum requirements should be opposed. Local control by school districts and the determination at the local level of the way such health issues as AIDS will be handled is preferable. Because of the seriousness of AIDS, it is likely that more communities and school districts will develop their own programs in response to this issue.

Response: Although the bill requires that the state board and the Department of Public Health provide teacher training and develop and distribute material on the teaching of AIDS, local boards of education would retain the right to approve the choice of curricula to be used.

POSITIONS:

- The State Board of Education supports the bill. (5-9-88)
- A representative of the Department of Education testified in support of the bill. (5-9-88)
- A representative of the Department of Public Health testified in support of the bill. (5-9-88)
- The Michigan Federation of Teachers AFL-CIO supports the bill. (5-6-88)
- The Michigan Association of School Administrators supports the bill. (5-6-88)
- Planned Parenthood Affiliates of Michigan supports the bill. (5-9-88)

H.B. 5188 (5-10-88)

OVER

The Michigan Education Association supports the bill, provided that no additional costs are imposed on schools for AIDS programs. (5-6-88)

The Michigan Association of Elementary School Principals has no position on the bill. (5-6-88)

The Michigan Organization for Human Rights has no position on the bill. (5-9-88)

The Michigan Association of Intermediate School Administrators does not support the bill unless additional funds are appropriated to finance it. (5-6-88)