



**House
Legislative
Analysis
Section**

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CPR FOR TEACHERS

**House Bill 5241 (Substitute H-2)
First Analysis (11-21-96)**

**Sponsor: Rep. Sue Rocca
Committee: Health Policy**

THE APPARENT PROBLEM:

According to the latest statistics published by the National Safety Council (NSC), accidents account for almost half of all deaths among children and youth aged 1-24 years. The various accidents to which children are susceptible--cuts, falls, electrical shock, burns, airway obstructions, smoke inhalation, traumatic head injuries, asthma, allergic reactions--can be life-threatening, particularly if nearby adults do not know how to respond. In fact, in 1994, according to the NSC, approximately 40 percent of 51,207 deaths for children and youths aged 1 to 24 years were attributed to unintentional injuries.

Proper first aid or the prompt administration of cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) can mean the difference between life and death in an emergency situation. When such accidents happen in school buildings, there should be someone on hand who is properly trained in CPR and first aid. However, it is estimated that only five to ten percent of all teachers have had such training. Critics point out that, under the standards established by the American Corrections Association (ACA), of which Michigan is a member, all corrections officers must be trained in first aid and CPR. How, the argument runs, can we justify providing greater protection for those who have broken our laws than we provide for our children? Some have proposed to amend the law to provide for CPR and first aid requirements for public school teachers.

THE CONTENT OF THE BILL:

The bill would amend Part 22 of the Revised School Code, which governs teacher certification, to require that prospective public school teachers be certified in first aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR). Under Part 22 of the code, the state board of education must determine the requirements for teaching certificates. The bill would specify that a person applying for a teaching certificate would have to present satisfactory evidence to the board that he or she held valid certification in first aid and in CPR that had been approved by the Department of Education and issued by the American Red Cross, or a comparable organization or institution that had been approved by the department. The provision would be effective January 1, 1997. In addition, under the bill, a

public school teacher who received certification on or after January 1, 1997, would have to provide the board with annual documentation that he or she held this certification. If a person did not provide the required documentation, the board would have to suspend the person's teaching certificate until it was provided. If the person did not provide the required documentation for more than one year after the date it was due, then the person's teaching certificate would be revoked by the board.

MCL 380.1531d

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS:

The House Fiscal Agency estimates that the bill would have no impact on state funds. (11-20-96)

ARGUMENTS:

For:

One of the most important responsibilities one can have is caring for children, and it seems only reasonable that teachers be required to have first aid and CPR certification. Such requirements have already been imposed on day care centers. Those who must obtain certification in first aid and CPR in order to obtain a teaching certificate can fulfill their duty to comply with the bill's training requirements inexpensively. The American Red Cross conducts first aid and CPR training classes in most communities. It costs only \$50 for the agency's "Community First Aid and Safety" class, and the length of time involved in taking a class is 12 hours, after which a participant is certified in Adult CPR, Standard First Aid, and Child CPR. The American Heart Association also conducts CPR classes.

Against:

Under the bill, a prospective teacher would have to obtain certification in first aid and CPR in order to obtain a teaching certificate. Consequently, this cost would be borne by the candidate teacher. However, the bill also specifies that a teaching certificate could be revoked if a teacher failed to obtain recertification each year, but does

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not specify who is to bear the cost of recertification. In addition, the bill does not specify whether the training should take place during or after school hours. This could especially be a point of conflict in rural areas, where CPR and first aid training classes aren't always available. The bill should address these issues.

Response:

Issues involving reimbursement and time off work for continuing education are traditionally dealt with during contract negotiations, and would not be provided in the bill.

Against:

Many school districts employ teachers who are handicapped in various ways. The handicaps don't affect their teaching abilities (for example, some may require wheelchairs), but they should not be expected to perform first aid or CPR on students. An exemption from the requirements of the bill should be provided to these persons.

POSITIONS:

The American Red Cross' state relations representative testified before the House Health Policy Committee in support of the bill. (11-20-96)

The Michigan Association of School Boards has no formal position on the bill, but does support the concept of requiring that teachers hold first aid and CPR certification. (11-20-96)

The Michigan Federation of Teachers has no position on the bill. (11-20-96)

The Michigan Association of School Administrators opposes the bill. (11-10-96)

The Michigan Education Association opposes the bill as it contains no exemption for handicapped teachers. (11-20-96)

Analyst: R. Young

■ This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan House staff for use by House members in their deliberations, and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.