

HOUSE BILL REPORT

ESSB 5305

As Reported by House Committee On:
Health Care

Title: An act relating to the use of mercury-containing vaccines.

Brief Description: Prohibiting vaccinating pregnant women and children with mercury-containing vaccines.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Health & Long-Term Care (originally sponsored by Senators Rasmussen, Benton, Roach, Swecker, Zarelli, Regala, Stevens, Shin, Delvin, Franklin and Mulliken).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Health Care: 2/16/06, 2/17/06 [DPA].

Brief Summary of Engrossed Substitute Bill
(As Amended by House Committee)

- Prohibits the vaccination of a person who is pregnant or under 3 years of age with a vaccine that contains more than an established amount of mercury.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH CARE

Majority Report: Do pass as amended. Signed by 14 members: Representatives Cody, Chair; Campbell, Vice Chair; Morrell, Vice Chair; Hinkle, Ranking Minority Member; Curtis, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Alexander, Appleton, Bailey, Clibborn, Condotta, Green, Moeller, Schual-Berke and Skinner.

Staff: Chris Blake (786-7392).

Background:

Until 1999, thimerosal was frequently used in some vaccines as a preservative to prevent bacterial contamination, including vaccines for infants to protect against diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, Haemophilus influenzae type b, and Hepatitis B. Thimerosal consists, in part, of a type of mercury called ethyl mercury. In 1999, the Public Health Service agencies and the American Academy of Pediatrics recommended that thimerosal be removed from vaccines as a precautionary measure. According to the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, all routinely recommended licensed vaccines currently manufactured for children,

except for some influenza vaccines, contain either no thimerosal or only trace amounts of thimerosal.

Summary of Amended Bill:

Beginning July 1, 2007, a person who is pregnant or under 3 years of age may not be vaccinated with a vaccine or injected with a product that contains more than 0.5 micrograms of mercury per 0.5 milliliter dose, except for influenza vaccines which may contain up to 1.0 micrograms of mercury per 0.5 milliliter dose.

The Secretary of Health may suspend the prohibition against mercury-containing vaccines and products upon declaration of a public health emergency.

Legislative findings are made regarding the benefits of vaccines and that the intent of the bill is to assure the public of the safety of the vaccine supply.

Amended Bill Compared to Engrossed Substitute Bill:

The prohibition on providing mercury-containing vaccines and products that are not licensed by the Food and Drug Administration is removed. The prohibition instead applies to vaccines and products that contain more than 0.5 micrograms of mercury per 0.5 milliliter dose, except for influenza vaccines which may contain up to 1.0 micrograms of mercury.

Legislative findings are made regarding the benefits of vaccines and the safety of the vaccine supply.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: Mercury is dangerous in the environment and should not be allowed to be injected into children. All children should be vaccinated without parents having to worry about whether or not the vaccine will harm their children. If parents are fearful about the safety of vaccines, they will be less likely to have their children immunized. This bill will assure parents of the safety of vaccines. Children under 3 years of age cannot easily pass mercury through their bodies. Mercury may trigger autism.

Testimony Against: None.

Persons Testifying: Senator Rasmussen, prime sponsor; Diana Stadden, Autism Society of Washington; Ann Clifton and Mary Ann Newell, Mercury Awareness Team; and Tami Giles.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.