

SUBJECT: Eligibility to conduct school bus driver physical, mental, and vision exams

COMMITTEE: Public Safety — committee substitute recommended

VOTE: 8 ayes — B. Turner, Keel, Berman, Carter, Gutierrez, Hupp, P. King, Najera
0 nays
1 absent — Driver

WITNESSES: For — Lynda Sutliff; Lynda Woolbert, Coalition for Nurses in Advanced Practice
Against — None

DIGEST: CSHB 1409 would specify that a physician, chiropractor, advanced practice nurse, or physician assistant could conduct the annual mental and physical exam required for a school bus driver. It would specify that an ophthalmologist, optometrist, or therapeutic optometrist could conduct the vision exam.

This bill would take immediate effect if finally passed by a two-thirds record vote of the membership of each house.

SUPPORTERS SAY: Under current state law, the annual mental, physical, and vision exam for a school bus drivers can only be conducted by a physician. In rural areas, it would be easier to allow other health care professionals to do the exam. In practice, physician assistants and advanced nurse practitioners already conduct many of these exams, but a physician must sign the official forms. CSHB 1409 would make the process easier for all involved. Federal regulations already allow advanced practice nurses, physician assistants, osteopaths, and chiropractors to conduct examinations (49 CFR 172.101). CSHB 1409 would conform state law to these regulations.

OPPONENTS SAY: Chiropractors should not be included among those permitted to perform physical and mental exams for school bus drivers. Chiropractor training does not include blood tests, diagnostic procedures for the cardiovascular system, or screenings for potentially dangerous medical conditions. All of these are

important considerations for evaluating a school bus driver's health. However, doctors of osteopathic medicine, included in the original bill, should be added to CSHB 1409. Doctors of osteopathy are qualified to recognize potential health problems and are allowed by federal regulations to perform medical exams on school bus drivers (49 CFR 172.101).

NOTES: The committee substitute added chiropractors and therapeutic optometrists and removed osteopaths in listing health care professional authorized to conduct exams.