

SUBJECT: Changing spinal screening requirements for children in Texas schools

COMMITTEE: Public Education — committee substitute recommended

VOTE: 9 ayes — Aycock, Allen, Bohac, Deshotel, Galindo, González, Huberty, K. King, VanDeaver

0 nays

2 absent — Dutton, Farney

WITNESSES: For — Francis Luna, Texas School Nurses Organization; (*Registered, but did not testify*: Dwight Harris, Texas American Federation of Teachers; Troy Alexander, Texas Medical Association; Kevin Cooper, Texas Nurse Practitioners; Andrew Cates, Texas Nurses Association; Bobby Hillert, Texas Orthopedic Association; Clayton Travis, Texas Pediatric Society)

Against — None

On — (*Registered, but did not testify*: Monica Martinez, Texas Education Agency)

BACKGROUND: Health and Safety Code, sec. 37.001(b), as amended by SB 219 by Schwertner, effective April 2, 2015, requires the Health and Human Services executive commissioner, in cooperation with the Texas Education Agency, to adopt rules for mandatory spinal screening of children attending public and private school in grades 6 and 9. The Department of State Health Services must coordinate the spinal screening with any other screening programs on those children offered by the department.

Texas schools perform student health screenings, including scoliosis screenings, to identify potential health problems in their early stages. Early detection is critical to slowing the progression of the most common forms of scoliosis.

DIGEST: CSHB 2323 would require spinal screenings of girls in grades 5 and 7 and boys in grade 8, rather than requiring screenings of all children in grades 6 and 9. The Health and Human Services executive commissioner, in cooperation with the Texas Education Agency, would be required to adopt rules for this bill as soon as practicable after September 1, 2015.

This bill would take effect September 1, 2015, and would apply beginning with the 2016-17 school year.