

HB 2591 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Carrier: Sen. Gelser

Senate Committee On Rules

Action Date: 05/22/17
Action: Do pass.
Vote: 5-0-0-0
Yeas: 5 - Beyer, Boquist, Burdick, Ferrioli, Roblan
Fiscal: No fiscal impact
Revenue: No revenue impact
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WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Designates May of each year as Williams Syndrome Awareness Month.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Symptoms of Williams syndrome
- Medical issues people with Williams syndrome confront
- Importance of improving public awareness and advocacy
- Personal stories and experiences of families who have children with Williams syndrome

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

Williams syndrome is a rare genetic condition that is present at birth and is characterized by lifelong medical problems including cardiovascular disease, developmental delays and learning disabilities. J.C.P. Williams, a New Zealand cardiologist, first described Williams syndrome in 1961. Today as many as 30,000 individuals in the United States and one in every 10,000 worldwide are affected by Williams syndrome. Individuals with Williams syndrome often have medical and cognitive problems that occur side-by-side with striking verbal abilities, highly social personalities and an affinity for music. Adults with Williams syndrome often struggle with spatial relationships, abstract reasoning and processing nuanced social cues, making it difficult to maintain social interactions and lasting relationships. While few are able to be self-sufficient, many adults with Williams syndrome contribute to their communities as volunteers or through employment.

In 1982, the Williams Syndrome Association was founded as a nonprofit organization to raise public awareness, increase funding for critical new research and provide valuable information and support to families. Through their efforts, the Williams Syndrome Association has improved the quality of life and futures of those affected by Williams syndrome.

House Bill 2591 designates the month of May of each year as Williams Syndrome Awareness Month.