

BILL ANALYSIS

H.B. 1719
By: Zedler
Public Health
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

The current point of sale health warnings for tobacco products excludes information about smoking while pregnant and the subsequent risk of preterm birth. The purpose of the bill is to educate pregnant women about the dangers of smoking while pregnant.

A 2001 report by the Surgeon General states that smokers are more likely than non-smokers to deliver babies that are born premature, experience low birth weight, are stillborn, or die because of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS). More than 49,000 babies are born prematurely each year in Texas- one baby in eight, or 13% of all babies born. Premature birth is the leading cause of newborn death.

Premature births are responsible for nearly half of all infant hospitalization charges. In 2001, hospital charges for prematurely-related-infant-stays totaled \$13.6 billion. Premature births cost nearly 60 times more than uncomplicated births.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the committee's opinion that rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the Comptroller in SECTION 2 of this bill.

ANALYSIS

The bill adds language to a sign that is posted where cigarettes or tobacco products are sold that warns pregnant women not to smoke, and that smokers are more likely to have babies who are born premature, are stillborn, or die because of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS). The comptroller is required to adopt rules as necessary to implement this section within 90 days of the effective date.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2005