



**House
Legislative
Analysis
Section**

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POST ANABOLIC STEROID NOTICE
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Senate Bill 350 (Substitute H-2)
First Analysis (10-18-89)

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Sponsor: Sen. William Faust
Senate Committee: Health Policy
House Committee: Public Health
Mich. State Law Library

THE APPARENT PROBLEM:

The use of anabolic steroids carries with it the risk of serious side effects, including sterility (and, for men, atrophy of the testicles), stroke, psychosis, heart attack, kidney damage, liver disorders, and stunted bone growth. Nevertheless, because use of these steroids also results in increased strength and muscle bulk, many athletes and body builders use them to enhance both their performance and appearance. Because of reported widespread — and illegal — misuse and abuse of these steroids, legislation has been proposed to warn potential users of the legal penalties and possible physical and emotional damage associated with the illegal use of anabolic steroids.

THE CONTENT OF THE BILL:

The bill would create an act to require that weight lifting and body building facilities post warning signs about androgenic anabolic steroids and to impose administrative fines on facilities failing to do so.

More specifically, the bill would require "athletic service providers" (defined in the bill as anyone who owns or operates an educational athletic facility or a recreational athletic facility) to post a warning notice, produced and provided free of charge by the Department of Public Health, either in each locker room (in the case of athletic facilities owned or operated by educational institutions) or near the entrance to the facility and in each locker room (in the case of recreational athletic facilities).

Content of warning notice. The bill specifies the content and size of the required notices. Notices would have to include a warning that it is illegal in Michigan to "participate in the unlawful sale, use, possession, or exchange of androgenic anabolic steroids," as well as list both the maximum criminal penalties for breaking the law and the potential side effects from using anabolic steroids. In addition, the notice would have to include a warning that the shared use of hypodermic needles can transmit AIDS and hepatitis B.

Enforcement. The Department of Public Health (DPH) would be able to promulgate rules to implement and enforce the bill, and could require local health departments to enforce the bill and any rules promulgated under the bill.

Penalties. Someone who failed to post the required notice could be fined up to \$50. Someone who failed to post the required notice after receiving written notice of the violation could be fined up to \$50 for each day the violation continued after being notified.

Definitions. The bill would define "educational athletic facility" to mean a facility owned or operated by an educational institution (public or private school, college, or university) for the purposes of "maintaining or enhancing the aerobic condition or physical strength" of one or more

individuals or for athletic competition between two or more individuals.

"Recreational athletic facility" would be defined to mean "a gymnasium, fitness center, or health spa that is used or intended to be used to maintain or enhance the physical strength of individuals through the use of free weights or weight lifting machinery." The definition would explicitly exclude residential gymnasiums, fitness centers, or health spas used only by residents or their nonpaying guests.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Androgenic ("male") anabolic (tissue-building) steroids were first used by Nazis during World War II to increase the aggressiveness of their military troops. They first appeared in athletics in 1952, when Soviet athletes used them for the 1952 Helsinki Olympics. A Dr. John Zeigler introduced these steroids to American athletes two years later, and said, before his death in 1983, that he wished that he'd never heard of the word "steroid."

Androgenic anabolic steroids were legally used from the 1950s to the late 1960s, mainly by body builders, discus throwers, shot-putters, and football players, but since the late 1960s (when the East German swim team had to be introduced by name and sex, since use of these steroids had so "masculinized" many of the women team members as to make sexual identification difficult) these steroids have been banned from most athletic competitions.

Androgenic anabolic steroids are synthetic versions of the male hormone testosterone. They are used by people — especially by athletes in sports where bulk and strength are advantageous and by body builders where bulk and muscle "definition" are valued — because these steroids result in increases in size, strength and performance. Their use, however, carries with it serious side effects for both men and women. Not surprisingly, since these are male-like hormones, the effect of androgenic steroids on females is "masculinization:" increased facial and body hair, decreased breast size, menstrual irregularities, deepened voice, broader back and wider shoulders, and male pattern baldness. In males, their use also results in increased facial and body hair, but, almost paradoxically, also in the development of female sex characteristics (such as enlarged breasts and nipples), in decreased sex drive, decreased number and duration of erections, shrinkage of testicles, and reduced or non-existent sperm count. In both sexes the use of anabolic steroids has resulted in liver disorders (including blood-filled cysts and hardening of the liver), cardiovascular disorders (such as high blood pressure, increased risk of blood clots, elevated levels of certain kinds of cholesterol, and possible increase in the risk of stroke), central nervous system disorders (dizziness, headaches, fatigue, irritability, depression, and sleep disorders), and gastrointestinal disorders (such as cramps, spasms, and gastric irritation). Ironically, although these drugs usually are taken to enhance physical performance,

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their use also increases people's susceptibility to injuries such as increased risk of muscle tears and of tendonitis and an increased risk of fractures due to weakened bones because of calcium loss. Negative psychological side effects include irritability (sometimes extreme enough to have earned the nickname "roid rage"), severe mood swings, aggressive behavior, and depression. Other side effects include acne, oily skin and hair, retention of fluids and sodium, and spotted or darkened skin.

Anabolic steroids do have medically legitimate uses, including treatment of certain anemias, hereditary angioedema, certain cases of breast cancer, and possible osteoporosis. In children, the medically indicated uses have included initiation of delayed puberty, treatment of hypogonadism, and growth promotion.

Androgenic anabolic steroids are different from cortical steroids, which include hormones formed in the cortex of the adrenal gland and are used to suppress inflammation, counter serious attacks of asthma, and as replacement therapy for patients with adrenal insufficiency.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ACTION:

The House Committee on Public Health adopted a substitute for the bill which:

- revises the definition of "recreational athletic facility" to specifically include reference to the use of free weights and weight lifting machinery and to exclude residential gyms under certain circumstances;
- includes the definition of "serious communicable disease or infection" as it appears elsewhere in the Public Health Code;
- requires the Department of Public Health to produce the required notice (and to revise it as necessary), and to provide copies of it free of charge to those required to post it;
- deletes testosterone and human growth hormone as substances included in the warning notice (while adding the qualifier "androgenic" to anabolic steroids); and
- allows the DPH to require (by "authorization") local health departments to inspect facilities required to have notices posted.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS:

According to the Senate Fiscal Agency, the version of the bill passed by the Senate would have not fiscal implications for the state. (5-8-89) Information on the House substitute is not available at this time. (10-18-89)

ARGUMENTS:

For:

The possible side effects of using androgenic anabolic steroids can be severe: death from stroke or heart attack and suicide have both been reported. But even if death does not result, the use of anabolic steroids can have permanent negative side effects, including impotence, sterility, kidney damage, cardiovascular disease, high blood pressure, high blood cholesterol, and, for women, permanent "masculinization" (including deepening of the voice and excessive body hair). Although there are not clear-cut medical studies establishing the effectiveness of steroid use in increasing muscle mass or strength, enough people believe that their size and performance will be enhanced that the non-medical (and illegal) use of anabolic

steroids in sports and among body builders reportedly is very widespread.

A good first step in combating the illegal use of these potentially damaging drugs would be to educate target populations (that is, those most likely to use anabolic steroids). The bill would do this by requiring the posting of certain information about the drugs in places — school athletic facilities and body-building gyms — where people most likely to use the drugs often are found.

POSITIONS:

The Department of Public Health has not yet taken a position on the bill. (11-18-89)

The Michigan Pharmacists Association supports the bill. (10-17-89)

The Michigan State Medical Society supports the concept of the bill. (10-17-89)