

LESC bill analyses are available on the New Mexico Legislature website (www.nmlegis.gov). Bill analyses are prepared by LESC staff for standing education committees of the New Mexico Legislature. LESC does not assume any responsibility for the accuracy of these reports if they are used for other purposes.

LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE
BILL ANALYSIS
53rd Legislature, 2nd Session, 2018

Bill Number SM101 **Sponsor** Stewart
Tracking Number .210449.1 **Committee Referrals** SEC
Short Title Overweight Backpack Health Risks
Analyst Herz **Original Date** 2/8/18
Last Updated _____

BILL SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

Senate Memorial 101 encourages school administrators, teachers, parents, and students to learn about the potential health risks of carrying heavy backpacks and take proactive measures to avoid injury. The memorial also asks schools to consider using more e-textbooks and utilizing other methods to reduce the weight of backpacks.

FISCAL IMPACT

Legislative memorials do not carry appropriations.

SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

Medical studies have highlighted potential health risks for students resulting from carrying overweight backpacks. Overall, researchers have found that student back pain is significantly associated with heavier backpacks. These effects were more pronounced among younger students and students who did not have access to a locker. Additionally, children with back problems are more likely to have back problems as adults. Most medical associations, including the American Chiropractic Association and the American Occupational Therapy Association, recommend limiting backpack weight to no more than 10 percent of the student's body weight.

Increasingly, textbook publishers produce electronic versions of textbooks, which can reduce the weight of textbooks carried in backpacks. However, as the use of electronic resources increases, so does the necessity of student access to technology. Public schools that choose to use more electronic resources may need to find additional resources to ensure that all students can access materials.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- LESC Files

MPH/rab