

# **WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE**

## **2026 REGULAR SESSION**

**Introduced**

### **House Bill 5238**

By Delegates Hornbuckle and Garcia

[Introduced February 05, 2026; referred to the

Committee on Finance]

1 A BILL to amend the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, by adding a new article,  
2 designated §16-25A-1, §16-25A-2, and §16-25A-3, relating to screening for adverse  
3 childhood experiences; providing for a definition and setting forth legislative findings; and  
4 setting forth terms for mandatory insurance coverage and school coverage.

*Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:*

**ARTICLE 25A. ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES.**

**§16-25A-1. Legislative findings.**

1 There is evidence of causation between adverse childhood experiences and addiction and  
2 chronic disease. Early detection and intervention reduce the likelihood that these experiences will  
3 lead to morbidity later in life. Factors such as food insecurity, housing insecurity, living in a single  
4 parent household, or having a parent who suffers from substance use disorder are all indicators of  
5 childhood trauma and all are prevalent in this state. This causes the citizens of this state to be  
6 more at risk for chronic disease than citizens of the other states.

**§16-25A-2. Definition.**

1 "Adverse Childhood Experiences" are traumatic experiences occurring in childhood which  
2 create real and lasting physiological changes to the brain, immune system, stress response, and  
3 behavior patterns; the result of which is higher risk for certain chronic diseases such as obesity,  
4 heart disease, respiratory illness, and even lung cancer.

**§16-25A-3. Mandatory insurance coverage; school coverage.**

1 All public and private health insurance offered in this state shall cover screening for  
2 adverse childhood experiences as part of preventative child wellness visits. In cases where the  
3 child has no form of health insurance, the State Department of Education shall develop a program  
4 to provide school-based adverse childhood experiences screening through local schools.

NOTE: The purpose of this bill is to require screenings for adverse childhood experiences.

Strike-throughs indicate language that would be stricken from a heading or the present law  
and underscoring indicates new language that would be added.