

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.