

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 6546

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As Reported By Senate Committee On:  
Health & Long-Term Care, February 2, 2000  
Ways & Means, February 8, 2000

**Title:** An act relating to family caregiver long-term care information and support services.

**Brief Description:** Providing a program to support family and other unpaid long-term caregivers.

**Sponsors:** Senators Costa, Winsley, Kohl-Welles, Thibaudeau, Wojahn, Jacobsen, Spanel, Gardner, Goings, Rasmussen, Prentice, McAuliffe and Kline.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Health & Long-Term Care: 1/25/2000, 2/2/2000 [DPS-WM].  
Ways & Means: 2/7/2000, 2/8/2000 [DP2S].

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & LONG-TERM CARE

**Majority Report:** That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6546 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators Thibaudeau, Chair; Wojahn, Vice Chair; Costa, Franklin, Johnson and Winsley.

**Staff:** Rhoda Jones (786-7198)

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

**Majority Report:** That Second Substitute Senate Bill No. 6546 be substituted therefor, and the second substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Loveland, Chair; Bauer, Vice Chair; Brown, Vice Chair; Fairley, Fraser, Honeyford, Kline, Kohl-Welles, Long, McDonald, Rasmussen, Rossi, B. Sheldon, Snyder, Spanel, Winsley, Wojahn and Zarelli.

**Staff:** Tim Yowell (786-7435)

**Background:** Most people who need long-term care, whether they are elderly or disabled, get their care from a family member, friend, or volunteer. As people age, relatively few leave home.

The thousands of families and unpaid caregivers who make up the informal long-term care system in this state usually rely on their friends, community, church, and resources like the Area Agencies on Aging (AAA) for support with the demanding duties of daily caregiving.

Communities differ in how available these resources are, but currently there is no centralized place statewide where unpaid caregivers can be connected to information, support, and temporary relief. The 13 AAAs provide respite care programs to eligible caregivers statewide. Studies have shown that respite care significantly postpones the need for institutionalizing chronically ill or the elderly living at home.

**Summary of Second Substitute Bill:** A comprehensive program of long-term care information and support for uncompensated caregivers is authorized through the Area Agencies on Aging. These services include general information for caregivers including how to access the state's long-term care system, counseling, support groups, training, translation services, transportation, shopping help, and advocacy.

**Second Substitute Bill Compared to Substitute Bill:** The null and void clause is removed.

**Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:** The appropriation section is removed and replaced with a null and void clause.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Effective Date:** Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

**Testimony For (Health & Long-Term Care):** The vast majority of people who provide long-term care do not get paid for their services. They should get as much support as possible.

**Testimony Against (Health & Long-Term Care):** None.

**Testified (Health & Long-Term Care):** PRO: Richard Dorsett, Assn. of Area Agencies on Aging; Sally Nixon, Pierce County Human Services; Norma Boushey, Pierce County Aging and Long-Term Care Advisory Board; Norm Anderson; Kathy Leitch, DSHS, AASA.

**Testimony For (Ways & Means):** There are an estimated 500,000 people providing an estimated \$4 billion per year of unpaid care. Supporting these people will help avoid future state costs later, and also help the caregivers' employers avoid the costs of absenteeism and lost productivity.

**Testimony Against (Ways & Means):** None.

**Testified (Ways & Means):** Senator Jeralita Costa, prime sponsor; Richard Dorsett, Association of Area Agencies on Aging.