

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2511

As Passed House
February 11, 1994

Title: An act relating to involuntary treatment.

Brief Description: Petitioning for involuntary treatment.

Sponsors: Representatives Leonard, Cooke, Thibaudeau, King and Ogden; by request of Department of Social and Health Services.

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
Human Services, February 3, 1994, DP;
Passed House, February 11, 1994, 93-0.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 11 members:
Representatives Leonard, Chair; Thibaudeau, Vice Chair;
Cooke, Ranking Minority Member; Talcott, Assistant Ranking
Minority Member; Brown; Caver; Karahalios; Lisk; Padden;
Patterson and Wolfe.

Staff: John Welsh (786-7133).

Background: State law provides for the involuntary commitment of persons who are incapacitated by alcohol or other psychoactive chemicals and who have impaired judgment with respect to the need for treatment. Under such circumstances, a person may be committed who constitutes a danger to self, to others or to property.

Summary of Bill: For the purpose of commitment, the risk of dangerousness presented by an impaired person is clarified. A person incapacitated by alcohol or other psychoactive chemicals is subject to involuntary treatment if he or she presents a substantial risk and likelihood of serious harm to himself or herself, to any other person or to property.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.

Testimony For: A court decision held that the current standard of dangerousness a person must exhibit to be subject to involuntary treatment was insufficient to justify loss of liberty, even for treatment purposes. The new language is identical to the involuntary treatment law for mental illness and represents a more compelling level of dangerousness for involuntary commitment which has withstood judicial scrutiny.

Testimony Against: None.

Witnesses: Linda Grant, Association of Alcoholism Programs (pro); Ken Stark, Department of Social and Health Services (pro); and Bonnie Jacques, Department of Social and Health Services (pro).