

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5441

AS PASSED SENATE, FEBRUARY 27, 1993

**Brief Description:** Updating statutes for rehabilitation services for handicapped persons.

**SPONSORS:** Senators McAuliffe, Erwin, Talmadge, M. Rasmussen, Drew, Spanel, Loveland, von Reichbauer and Winsley; by request of Department of Social and Health Services

**SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES**

**Majority Report:** Do pass.

Signed by Senators Talmadge, Chairman; Wojahn, Vice Chairman; Deccio, Erwin, Franklin, Fraser, Hargrove, McAuliffe, Moyer, Niemi, Prentice, Sheldon, and Winsley.

**Staff:** Martin Lovinger (786-7443)

**Hearing Dates:** February 9, 1993

**BACKGROUND:**

The current state law regarding rehabilitation services for persons with disabilities is over 20 years old. As a result the law contains language which is archaic and in some cases demeaning to the intended recipients of the services provided. In addition, rehabilitation practices have changed since the existing statute was enacted.

The current law is also inconsistent with federal law and regulations in a number of respects. Federal guidelines narrow the scope of eligibility to individuals with disabilities. People who have cultural, social or behavioral disadvantages are not covered under federal law as they are under state law. Federal law requires the active participation of both the state Rehabilitation Advisory Council and the state Independent Living Advisory Council. Both of these advisory bodies exist in Washington, but the role they play is not specifically addressed in statute.

**SUMMARY:**

The statutes providing rehabilitation services for individuals with disabilities are updated to reflect current terminology associated with individuals with disabilities. The language is changed to describe current vocational rehabilitation services and to bring state law into line with federal law.

Eligibility for services is limited to those who have a qualifying disability. People whose barriers to employment are social, cultural, educational, environmental or vocational

problems are not eligible for services unless they have a qualifying disability.

DSHS must coordinate administration of rehabilitation services with the state Rehabilitation Advisory Council and the state Independent Living Advisory Council. DSHS may establish cooperative agreements with other state and local agencies.

**Appropriation:** none

**Revenue:** none

**Fiscal Note:** available

**TESTIMONY FOR:**

This bill provides updated and new definitions and terminology to match current trends and federal standards. This is a good housekeeping bill to update a statute over 20 years old.

**TESTIMONY AGAINST:** None

**TESTIFIED:** Jeanne Munro, Director, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, DSHS (pro)