

# FINAL BILL REPORT

## SSB 6046

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C 404 L 97  
Synopsis as Enacted

**Brief Description:** Creating a study by the utilities and transportation commission on universal telecommunications service.

**Sponsors:** Senate Committee on Energy & Utilities (originally sponsored by Senator Finkbeiner).

**Senate Committee on Energy & Utilities**  
**House Committee on Energy & Utilities**

**Background:** The concept of universal service— in the telephone network has been prevalent since the early part of this century in the United States. This premise holds that the value of the network is higher for all when more users are interconnected.

The universal service concept was embraced by generally levelizing the costs of different areas, allowing various subsidies to cover some of the costs of areas that were more expensive to serve. With competition becoming more prevalent in the telecommunications industry, any universal service subsidies will be more challenging to impose.

**Summary:** By January 1, 1998, the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission is directed to study and make recommendations on the future of providing universal service telecommunications services in the state. The study is to include a recommended definition of basic service, analysis of potential carriers including wireless, an analysis of cost methodologies, and options for generating and disbursing universal service funding. Completion of the study may be delayed until six months after the Federal Communications Commission adopts universal service rules.

**Votes on Final Passage:**

Senate	45	0	
House	98	0	(House amended)
Senate	46	0	(Senate concurred)

**Effective:** July 27, 1997