

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 2454

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Health & Long-Term Care, February 23, 2000
Ways & Means, February 28, 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: House Committee on Health Care (originally sponsored by Representatives Edmonds, Parlette, Cody, Kenney, Radcliff, Kagi, Edwards, Lantz, Hatfield, Ogden, Conway, Veloria, Lovick, Kessler, O'Brien, Regala, McDonald, Carlson, Tokuda, Cooper, Van Luven, Ruderman, Murray, Schual-Berke, Scott, Stensen, Keiser, Santos, Pflug, Rockefeller, Wood and McIntire).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Health & Long-Term Care: 2/21/2000, 2/23/2000 [DP-WM].
Ways & Means: 2/28/2000 [DPA].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & LONG-TERM CARE

Majority Report: Do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

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

Staff: Rhoda Jones (786-7198)

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Majority Report: Do pass as amended.

Signed by Senators Loveland, Chair; Bauer, Vice Chair; Brown, Vice Chair; Fairley, Fraser, Honeyford, Kline, Kohl-Welles, Long, McDonald, Rasmussen, Roach, Rossi, B. Sheldon, Snyder, Spanel, Thibaudeau, West, 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 Amended 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.

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

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For (Health & Long-Term Care): This type of program will help people who are caregivers continue in that job and not be forced to place their loved ones in long-term care facilities. Helping unpaid caregivers will ultimately save the state money.

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

Testified (Health & Long-Term Care): PRO: Bob First, AARP; Richard Dorsett, WYA; Dennis Mahar, LMTAAA.