

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 6733

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As Reported By Senate Committee On:  
Health & Long-Term Care, February 6, 2002

**Title:** An act relating to extending service choices for people with developmental disabilities including those living in their own homes.

**Brief Description:** Extending service choices for people with developmental disabilities including those living in their own homes.

**Sponsors:** Senators Thibaudeau, Deccio, Kohl-Welles, Prentice and Rasmussen.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Health & Long-Term Care: 2/4/02, 2/6/02 [DPS].

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

**Majority Report:** That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6733 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Thibaudeau, Chair; Franklin, Vice Chair; Costa, Deccio and Parlette.

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

**Background:** It is generally recognized that family caregiving for the developmentally disabled is a desirable and the least expensive means to the state of providing long-term care. It is also suggested that people who care for their loved ones at home need occasional relief, especially when the people they care for have serious behavior issues or need constant supervision. Providing this relief in the form of respite care extends the caregiving capacity of in-home situations and reduces the effects of stress on caregivers.

In some of the state's residential habilitation centers (RHCs) vacant beds are currently being used to provide respite care to caregivers. These are available on a scheduled and emergency basis. There is concern that opportunity for respite care has not increased enough in this state to provide for in-home caregivers who need relief.

In 1998, the Legislature passed SB 6751 addressing the choice of state services to be available to individuals with developmental disabilities. It called for a developmental disabilities stakeholder group to work with the department in creating a broad plan for developmental disabilities services in the state. The Department of Social and Health Services was directed to implement an outreach program to ensure that anyone with developmental disabilities was fully informed of state services. The provisions of this act expire on June 30, 2003.

**Summary of Substitute Bill:** Any vacancy in a residential habilitation center must be available for respite care. These beds must serve any individual with developmental disabilities, regardless of their age.

The expiration dates in SB 6751 are eliminated.

**Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:** Respite care beds are available within budgeted funding levels.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** New fiscal note requested on January 25, 2002.

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

**Testimony For:** Respite care is desperately needed and these institutions have a lot of expertise in dealing with difficult clients.

**Testimony Against:** Respite care in RHCs are not viable options for most families who don't live near one and wouldn't want their child put in an institution.

**Testified:** Bill Sellars, The Arc of Wash (con); Paul Strand, Action for RHCs (pro); Linda Rolfe, DSHS/DDD; Kenneth Neal, Action for RHCs (pro); Terri Anderson, FHMC, VOR (pro); Elizabeth Cantrell, Friends of Fircrest, Alpha Spring Meadows Homes (pro); Phil Jordan WPAS (con); Shayne Nagel, parent (con); Bob Gee, Parents Families of the Retarded (pro); Tom Dean, parent, Friends of Rainier (pro); Bev Hermanson, WFSE (pro).