

SSB 5521 - S AMD 178

By Senators Rasmussen and Doumit

3/13/03 NOT ADOPTED

1 On page 23, after line 5, insert the following:

2 NEW SECTION **Sec. 10.** The legislature finds that access to health  
3 care services is an unavoidable need of all human beings, and that the  
4 primary method used to pay for care is health insurance whether  
5 financed by private or public funds. The cost of health care insurance  
6 is rising at three times the rate of inflation, having a significant  
7 impact on the solvency of state and local governments. Fourteen percent  
8 of citizens nationally and about five hundred thousand citizens in the  
9 state are without health care insurance. Employers, whether large or  
10 small, public or private, are finding it increasingly difficult to find  
11 and provide health care benefits to employees, with employees and their  
12 families being forced to bear an increasing portion of this rising  
13 health care insurance burden. Health care providers are struggling to  
14 remain competitive in an increasingly complex market.

15 NEW SECTION **Sec. 11.** A new section is added to Chapter 48.21 RCW  
16 as follows:

17 (1) A health care access options task force is created to be  
18 composed of nineteen members appointed as follows:

19 (a) Twelve members are to be appointed jointly by the speaker of  
20 the House of Representatives and the president of the Senate: (i) a  
21 representative of a major state corporation, selected in consultation  
22 with the Association of Washington Business; (ii) a representative of  
23 small businesses, to be selected from a list of nominees submitted  
24 jointly by the national federation of independent business and the  
25 independent business association; (iii) two representatives of health  
26 care consumers, one of whom shall represent people with individual  
27 health insurance, and one of whom shall represent the interests of  
28 people without health insurance; (iv) two representatives of organized  
29 labor, one representing a trust that purchases insurance through a  
30 Taft-Hartley plan, to be selected in consultation with the Washington

1 State Labor Council; (v) three members selected to represent health  
2 care providers, including a hospital representative, a licensed  
3 physician, and a rural health care provider, selected in consultation  
4 with appropriate health care provider organizations; (vi) two  
5 representatives of health insurance carriers; and (vii) the insurance  
6 commissioner, who shall serve as the cochair of the task force and  
7 shall, in addition, be responsible for coordinating its administrative  
8 and ministerial duties. One of the health care consumer  
9 representatives shall serve as the cochair of the task force, to be  
10 elected by the members of the task force.

11 (b) Four members shall be selected to represent the Legislature, to  
12 be chosen by each of the four caucuses.

13 (c) The Secretary of the Department of Social and Health Services,  
14 the Secretary of the Department of Health, and the Administrator of the  
15 Washington State Health Care Authority shall serve as ex officio  
16 members of the task force.

17 (2) The health care access options task force shall examine the  
18 privately funded health care insurance system in the State of  
19 Washington and make recommendations for its improvement, emphasizing  
20 the availability of health insurance for businesses with fewer than 51  
21 employees. The underserved areas of Washington and the total aspect of  
22 the delivery of health care in Washington, including telemedicine,  
23 shall also be reviewed. The task force shall prepare a report of its  
24 findings, including health insurance laws in other states that are  
25 providing greater choice, more participating insurance carriers  
26 offering health insurance, and greater price flexibility as compared to  
27 Washington state. The task force shall seek testimony and information  
28 from a broad range of health care stakeholders, and actively solicit  
29 public comment in a community meeting process to build a consensus on  
30 the values to be used as a guide to improving the privately and  
31 publicly funded health care system. The task force shall review the  
32 recommendations of previous health care system analyses. The task  
33 force is authorized to establish subcommittees and technical advisory  
34 committees as needed to carry out its responsibilities. The task force  
35 shall seek grant funds for the community meeting process, and is  
36 encouraged to coordinate its efforts with ongoing efforts such as those  
37 of the Washington health foundation. The task force shall prepare a  
38 report including its findings and recommendations and transmit this

1 report to the Legislature and the Governor no later than January 1,  
2 2005."

3 --- END ---

4 SSB 5521 - S AMD  
5 By Senator Doumit

6

7 On page 1, on line 4 of the title, after "a", delete "new  
8 section" and add "new sections".

--- END ---

**EFFECT:** Creates task force to study health insurance needs with emphasis on small businesses.

SSB 5521 - S AMD  
By Senator Doumit

On page , on line ... of the title, after "...", insert "..."

--- END ---

**EFFECT:** Adds advisory committee.