

SENATE BILL REPORT

ESB 5198

As Passed Senate, February 26, 2003

Title: An act relating to public hospital district recruitment and training.

Brief Description: Revising authority of public hospital districts to pay recruitment expenses and employee training and education expenses.

Sponsors: Senators Parlette, Winsley, Deccio, Thibaudeau, Keiser, Franklin and Brandland.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Health & Long-Term Care: 1/28/03, 1/30/03 [DPS].

Passed Senate: 2/26/03, 49-0.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & LONG-TERM CARE

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5198 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Deccio, Chair; Winsley, Vice Chair; Brandland, Franklin, Keiser and Parlette.

Staff: Tanya Karwaki (786-7447)

Background: Public hospital districts are local governments operating under statutory authority. Their purpose is to provide hospital and health care services to their communities. Public hospital districts are authorized, in part, to pay actual necessary travel expenses and living expenses for physicians who are candidates for medical staff positions and other job candidates. They are also authorized to make contracts and employ superintendents, attorneys, technical and professional assistants, and all other employees.

There is concern that public hospital districts are unable, under current law, to engage in certain health care personnel recruitment and training activities.

Summary of Bill: The travel and living expenses that public hospital districts are authorized to pay are expanded to include expenses incurred by family members accompanying the physician or other health care practitioner candidate.

Public hospital districts are authorized to contract with current or prospective employees or medical staff members, or other health care practitioners. Under the contractual agreement, the public hospital district pays or reimburses the health care training or education expenses incurred by a current or prospective employee, medical staff member, or other health care practitioner in exchange for that individual providing services beneficial to the public hospital district. The health care training or education expenses that public hospital districts may pay for include, but are not limited to, debt obligations.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 27, 2003.

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

Testimony For: This bill clarifies the statutory authority of public hospital districts. This bill would allow public hospital districts to pay the travel expenses incurred by family members accompanying a job candidate. It would also permit public hospital districts to contract with employees, who would provide services beneficial to the public hospital district in return for paying training or education costs. Recruiting health care professionals to rural areas is difficult and this may alleviate some of the problems.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Senator Parlette, prime sponsor (pro); Lisa Thatcher, Association of Washington Public Hospital Districts (pro).