

6656-S

Sponsor(s): Senate Committee on Technology & Communications (originally sponsored by Senators Schmidt and Esser; by request of Utilities & Transportation Commission and Department of Social and Health Services)

Brief Description: Revising the Washington telephone assistance program.

SB 6656-S - DIGEST

(DIGEST OF PROPOSED 1ST SUBSTITUTE)

Finds that recent changes in the telecommunications industry, including increased competition among companies and services, the increased migration of telephone customers to wireless services, and the development of new technologies such as voice-over-internet, have raised concerns about the long-term funding of the Washington telephone assistance program and its continued ability to provide assistance to low-income persons who may not be able to afford needed telephone services.

Directs the department of social and health services to convene a working group consisting of representatives of telecommunications providers, the office of financial management, the utilities and transportation commission, the office of public counsel, designees of the chair of the senate technology and communications committee and the house technology, telecommunications and energy committee, and community action agencies to review the current Washington telephone assistance program structure and the viability of its long-term funding.

Requires the department to report its findings and recommendations to the legislature by December 1, 2004.