

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 5144

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As of January 25, 2007

**Title:** An act relating to certificates of need criteria for nursing home beds.

**Brief Description:** Including number and needs of married couples in certificates of need criteria for nursing home beds.

**Sponsors:** Senators Carrell, Kastama, Stevens, Hargrove, Marr, McAuliffe, Shin and Rasmussen.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Health & Long-Term Care: 1/25/07.

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

**Staff:** Edith Rice (786-7444)

**Background:** The construction of new health care facilities, the sale, purchase, or lease of existing hospitals, and the construction or renovation of nursing homes are some examples of those undertakings subject to the certificate of need program administered by the Department of Health. The certificate of need program requires that the Department review proposals for certain health care facilities and services to ensure that they meet a community need, will provide quality health care services, are financially feasible and will help contain health care costs. The Department of Health issues, suspends, denies, or revokes certificates of need in accord with statutory provisions, established procedures, and specific criteria. Current criteria do not include any specific reference to the needs of married couples.

**Summary of Bill:** The bill as referred to committee was not considered.

**EFFECT OF PROPOSED SUBSTITUTE (Health & Long-Term Care):** The Legislature recognizes that the population of those who are elderly is increasing. The certificate of need process should be responsive to this trend and recognize the increasing need for long term care which will allow married couples to continue to live together when one needs skilled nursing care. Criteria for certificate of need applications should include the number and needs of married couples residing in the planning area to be served.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

**Committee/Commission/Task Force Created:** No.

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*This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.*

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

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:** PRO: Married couples who are elderly and need skilled nursing care must move far away from their spouse in order to receive care. Separation and the stress of travel to visit a loved one hastens death. Seniors often don't have transportation to make visiting possible. This is a form of elder abuse. We moved here because we were told skilled nursing care would be available.

OTHER: The Department of Health is not aware that this standard has been used in other jurisdictions. The Certificate of Need statute is very detailed and the process was followed for this area. This area currently has a more than adequate number of beds.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Senator Mike Carrell, prime sponsor; Herschel Watson, Reverend Francis Jeffrey, Jim Hobson, Kenneth Ward and Dale Collison, Patriot's Landing.

OTHER: Laurie Jinkins, Department of Health.