

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 5211

---

As of January 30, 2007

**Title:** An act relating to adult family homes.

**Brief Description:** Concerning adult family homes.

**Sponsors:** Senators Carrell and Stevens.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Health & Long-Term Care: 1/29/07.

---

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

**Staff:** Rhoda Donkin (786-7465)

**Background:** There are 2,488 licensed adult family homes in this state. These facilities are residences licensed to provide care, room, and board to no more than six adults. Adult family homes have become the choice for elderly and disabled adults who seek alternatives to nursing homes and can not live alone.

The Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) licenses adult family homes. The licensing process requires that applicants comply with the same local building codes, fire regulations, and zoning requirements that would apply to any single family residence. DSHS will not grant a license to an applicant until the local municipality has inspected the facility for compliance with relevant building and fire codes. State licensing requirements look at the capacity of the applicant to provide services to their residents.

The number of adult family homes has increased statewide by almost 500 since 2000. There is concern that some municipalities have received an over-concentration of adult family homes.

**Summary of Bill:** DSHS is directed to establish standards for regulating adult family homes to avoid over-concentration of these facilities which are inconsistent with the objective of integrating residents into the general community. DSHS is directed to consult with municipalities to develop rules appropriate to the infrastructure and basic services available in the area where the adult family home is to be located.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Requested on January 22, 2007.

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

---

*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: Adopting dispersal restrictions will help to prevent creating an institutional environment in neighborhoods by facilities specifically designed to do the opposite. This provides an excellent opportunity for local input and will result in much better public policy. Adult family homes are a valuable resource. They should be sited where they offer the best opportunity for their residents to be integrated into the community.

CON: There is no general public cry about the concentration of adult family homes. It is already hard to place them, this would make it harder. The requirements here would use a lot of state staff time to meet with municipalities and discuss their concerns over adult family home siting issues. Each municipality would have different ideas about "over-concentration." The line between provisions in this bill and the Federal Fair Housing Act are not clear. This would have a disproportionate impact on people with disabilities.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Senator Mike Carrell, prime sponsor; Ted Gathe, City of Vancouver; Ronald Hendry, citizen, Oakbrook Home Owner's Association; Councilman Richardson, City of Lakewood.

CON: Louise Ryan, Long Term Care Ombudsman; Joyce Stockwell, DSHS; David Lord, Washington Advocacy and Protection Services; Bill Day, Adult Family Home Association.