

SENATE BILL REPORT

HJM 4000

As of March 20, 2009

Brief Description: Requesting passage of the federal act to restore payment of county health care costs.

Sponsors: Representatives O'Brien, Warnick, Takko, Morrell, Hasegawa, Simpson and Moeller.

Brief History: Passed House: 2/23/09, 95-1.

Committee Activity: Human Services & Corrections: 3/19/09.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES & CORRECTIONS

Staff: Kevin Black (786-7747)

Background: Medical care is available to persons with low income who qualify through various public assistance programs. Many such programs, such as Medicaid, Medicare, Supplemental Security Income, and the State Children's Health Insurance Program, rely partly on support from federal funds. Federal law prohibits expenditure of federal funds on services provided to a person who is in the custody of a jail, a prison, or a secure mental institution with more than 16 beds.

Jails and prisons in Washington are responsible for the medical costs of inmates within their care. These inmates are not eligible for coverage by state or federal public assistance programs while they reside within the institutions.

House Resolution (H.R.) 5698, known as the "Restoring the Partnership for County Health Care Costs Act of 2008," is a federal bill introduced April 3, 2008, by Representative Alcee L. Hastings (D-Fla.), Representative Rush Holt (D-N.J.) and Representative Michael Burgess (R-Texas). The bill would allow federal financial participation in public assistance programs provided to inmates of a jail who have not yet had their cases adjudicated. The bill remains in the House Subcommittee on Income Security and Family Support.

Summary of Bill: This joint memorial requests the President and members of the U.S. Congress to pass H.R. 5698, the Restoring Partnership for County Health Care Costs Act of 2008.

Appropriation: None.

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.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: This bill simply asks Congress to pass a bill. County responsibility for medical costs is a calamity. A person is innocent until proven guilty, and medical benefits shouldn't be terminated until proof of guilt.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Representative O'Brien, prime sponsor; James McMahan, Washington Association of County Officials.