

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5981

As of February 27, 1995

Title: An act relating to health care coverage for confined persons.

Brief Description: Prohibiting providers of health care coverage from reducing or terminating coverage because a person is in confinement.

Sponsors: Senators Prentice, Hargrove, Kohl, Heavey and Fairley.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Financial Institutions & Housing: 2/28/95.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS & HOUSING

Staff: Catherine Mele (786-7470)

Background: Detention facilities are required to provide and pay for health care for all offenders. These services may include essential medical care, dental care, mental health treatment, prescription services, laboratory procedures, and radiology procedures. Health care services are provided in a variety of ways. Some services are provided by on-site health care staff. However, other services are provided on-site by contracted health care providers, while services that cannot be conducted on-site are provided outside in health care facilities in the community and where the appropriate level of care is available.

There are concerns about the rising costs of health care for inmates. It is suggested that private companies pay for health benefits when an individual is incarcerated.

Summary of Bill: Health care service contractors, health maintenance organizations, certified health plans, disability insurers, and group and blanket disability insurers are prohibited from denying, refusing to issue or renew, and otherwise terminating coverage because an adult or juvenile is in confinement. Such private entities are prohibited from adding a surcharge or a rating factor to premiums because an adult or a juvenile is incarcerated.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 23, 1995.

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