

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6559

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Human Services & Corrections, February 4, 1998
Ways & Means, February 10, 1998

Title: An act relating to computation of the seventy-two hour period for evaluation and treatment of mental disorders.

Brief Description: Revising time limits for the seventy-two hour evaluation and treatment period for mental disorders.

Sponsors: Senators Zarelli and Stevens.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Human Services & Corrections: 2/3/98, 2/4/98 [DP].
Ways & Means: 2/9/98, 2/10/98 [DP, DNP]

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES & CORRECTIONS

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Long, Chair; Zarelli, Vice Chair; Hargrove, Kohl, Schow and Stevens.

Staff: Richard Rodger (786-7461)

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators West, Chair; Deccio, Vice Chair; Strannigan, Vice Chair; Hochstatter, Kohl, Long, McDonald, Roach, Rossi, Schow, Swecker and Zarelli.

Minority Report: Do not pass.

Signed by Senators Loveland, B. Sheldon and Thibaudeau.

Staff: Bryon Moore (786-7726)

Background: Any person who, as a result of a mental disorder, is gravely disabled or poses a likelihood of serious harm to self or others may be placed in an evaluation and treatment facility for up to 72 hours. Computation of the 72-hour limitation excludes weekends and holidays.

After evaluation of the person, the facility may file a petition requesting the person be held for 14 days of involuntary mental health treatment. The court holds a probable cause hearing to make a decision on the petition.

Summary of Bill: When a person is held in an evaluation and treatment facility for a mental health examination, the examination must be completed within 72 hours. At the end of the 72-hour time limit, the professional person conducting the evaluation must either inform the person that he or she will be detained for a probable cause hearing or release them from the facility.

The probable cause hearing must be held at the end of the 72-hour evaluation or on the next judicial day if the 72 hours ends on a weekend or holiday.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: This bill will help prevent needless, lengthy stays at evaluation and treatment facilities. Under the current law, a person may be held for evaluation for up to seven days for what is supposed to be a 72-hour evaluation. This bill will require the facilities to finish their evaluations within 72 hours.

Testimony Against: Evaluation and treatment facilities do not have sufficient professional and support staff on duty to meet the timelines over the weekend. This proposal will result in increased costs for a minimal benefit.

Testified: Senator Zarelli, prime sponsor (pro); Jann Hoppler, DSHS (con); Dana Robishaw (concerns).