

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2520

As Passed Legislature

Title: An act relating to consistent use of terms regarding state hospital patient status.

Brief Description: Changing terminology in the release from commitment of persons in mental treatment facilities.

Sponsors: Representatives Schual-Berke, Parlette and Cody; by request of Department of Social and Health Services.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Health Care: 1/25/00, 1/28/00 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 2/3/00, 95-0.

Senate Amended.

Passed Senate: 3/2/00, 48-0.

House Concurred: 3/5/00, 81-0.

Passed Legislature.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Provides consistent definitions of terms regarding the legal and medical status of state mental hospital patients.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH CARE

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 12 members: Representatives Cody, Democratic Co-Chair; Parlette, Republican Co-Chair; Pflug, Republican Vice Chair; Schual-Berke, Democratic Vice Chair; Alexander; Campbell; Conway; Edmonds; Edwards; Mulliken; Pennington and Ruderman.

Staff: David Knutson (786-7146).

Background:

Individuals are committed to state mental hospitals through legal procedures in superior court. Once admitted, a physician is involved in medical decisions related to the care of the individual. Terms used in the legal system and the medical system are not consistently used. The potential for confusion exists for such terms as "admission," "discharge," "detention," "commitment," and "release."

Summary of Bill:

A consistent set of legal and medical terms involving individuals served in state mental hospitals will be used. Potential confusion involving individuals' legal, medical, and financial status will be clarified.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: This legislation is necessary to end the inconsistent use of terms describing the legal and medical status of patients at state mental hospitals.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Pat Terry, Mental Health Division, Department of Social and Health Services.