

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6623

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Health & Long-Term Care, February 2, 2000

Title: An act relating to community services programs for persons with developmental disabilities.

Brief Description: Regulating wages of employees of community services programs for persons with developmental disabilities.

Sponsors: Senators Thibaudeau, Deccio, Kohl-Welles, Kline, Fairley and Rasmussen.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Health & Long-Term Care: 1/31/2000, 2/2/2000 [DP-WM].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & LONG-TERM CARE

Majority Report: Do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators Thibaudeau, Chair; Wojahn, Vice Chair; Costa, Deccio, Franklin and Johnson.

Staff: Rhoda Jones (786-7198)

Background: Community residential programs certified by the Department of Social and Health Services report difficulty retaining qualified staff because of the wages they pay workers based on current state reimbursement rates. The average wage for employees of residential programs is \$8.15 per hour.

Currently wages for state employees in the state operated living alternatives program average \$12.50 per hour.

Summary of Bill: The department is directed to adopt rules to pay workers in certified community residential programs a rate no less than 80 percent of the average hourly wage and benefits paid to employees of state operated living alternatives program.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 21, 2000.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect on July 1, 2001.

Testimony For: This wage increase is vital if the caregiving industry expects to attract and retain workers.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: PRO: Ed Holen, DD Council; Sharon Casey, Caralee Cook, CRSA; Tim Brown, DSHS IDDD; David G. Wood, Action for RHCs.