

SENATE BILL REPORT

SSB 5183

As Passed Senate, March 10, 2001

Title: An act relating to the licensing of adult family homes.

Brief Description: Licensing adult family homes.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Health & Long-Term Care (originally sponsored by Senators Thibaudeau, Winsley and Kohl-Welles; by request of Department of Social and Health Services).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Health & Long-Term Care: 1/22/01, 2/27/01 [DPS].
Passed Senate: 3/10/01, 49-0.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & LONG-TERM CARE

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5183 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Thibaudeau, Chair; Franklin, Vice Chair; Costa, Deccio, Fraser, Parlette and Winsley.

Staff: Rhoda Donkin (786-7198)

Background: The Department of Social and Health Services is responsible for licensing adult family homes, which provide community-based residential care for elderly and disabled individuals. The minimum qualifications for getting an adult family home license include being at least age 21, literate, able to demonstrate management ability, and complete some basic training. Background checks are also required to rule out any criminal convictions. The department may refuse to license an applicant who has a history of significant noncompliance with federal or state regulations, or laws in providing care or services to vulnerable adults or children. The department does not have statutory authority to deny an adult family home license based on the applicant's lack of ability or experience to provide care to vulnerable adults.

Summary of Bill: The Legislature asserts that the health, safety and well-being of vulnerable adults are the paramount concern in determining whether to issue a license to an applicant, and whether to take licensing actions against an existing one. Anyone applying for an adult family home license after September 1, 2001, must have a high school diploma, GED or any equivalent diploma, and must have had at least 320 hours of successful caregiving experience to vulnerable adults or children in licensed settings prior to operating or managing an adult family home.

The department gives priority to adult family home license applications that involve a license transfer from a current owner with residents to an applicant taking over the license.

Adult family home licensees and resident managers must be literate in English or have someone on staff able to communicate or make provisions for communicating with a resident who does not speak English. They must also be capable of understanding and speaking English enough to respond appropriately to emergency situations and deal with care plans.

Anyone applying for an adult family home license after September 1, 2001, and resident managers employed after September 1, 2001, must have at least 320 hours of direct caregiving with adults or children in a licensed or contracted setting.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 18, 2001.

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

Testimony For: Licensing standards for adult family homes need to be raised to protect against unqualified applicants.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Kathy Leitch, Pat Lashway, DSHS, Aging and Adult Services (pro); Jeff Larsen, Bill Day, WSRCC (con); Bruce W. Reeves, Senior Citizens' Lobby (pro).