

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 5391

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As Passed Senate, March 8, 2005

**Title:** An act relating to the public employees' benefits board offering a tricare supplemental insurance policy to employees who are eligible for this policy, but not eligible for medicare parts A and B.

**Brief Description:** Offering a tricare supplemental insurance policy to certain public employees.

**Sponsors:** Senators Keiser, Franklin, Brandland, Kastama, Johnson, Kohl-Welles and Kline.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Health & Long-Term Care: 2/2/05, 2/7/05 [DP].

Passed Senate: 3/8/05, 47-0.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & LONG-TERM CARE

**Majority Report:** Do pass.

Signed by Senators Keiser, Chair; Thibaudeau, Vice Chair; Deccio, Ranking Minority Member; Benson, Brandland, Franklin, Johnson, Kastama, Kline, Parlette and Poulsen.

**Staff:** Jonathan Seib (786-7427)

**Background:** TRICARE is the U.S. Department of Defense's (DOD) worldwide health care program for uniformed service members and their families. The Public Employee Benefits Board (PEBB) provides health coverage for state and other public employees.

TRICARE coverage is available to service members upon their retirement, even if they subsequently become employed. Reportedly, however, many of those who are subsequently employed by the state or other public employers choose PEBB coverage instead.

Current law does not allow PEBB to offer other than a comprehensive health benefit plan. It is suggested that if PEBB were allowed to offer a TRICARE supplement, retired military personnel employed by the state would retain their DOD funded TRICARE coverage, leaving the state to pay only for the less costly supplemental benefits.

**Summary of Bill:** The Health Care Authority may make available a TRICARE supplemental insurance policy to employees who are eligible.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Requested on February 1, 2005.

**Committee/Commission/Task Force Created:** No.

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

**Testimony For:** Tricare is earned under certain military service, but after serving, most seek second employment. When the person chooses comprehensive coverage from his or her second employer, Tricare becomes a secondary payer. This is to the disadvantage of the person and his or her employer. Adopting this bill would allow the state to cover a significant number of public employees at a lower cost than what is currently provided. It would also provide better coverage for Tricare enrollees.

**Testimony Against:** None.

**Who Testified:** PRO: Josh Benton, Walt Markoosky, American Benefits Services.