

SSB 5521 - S AMD 156

By Senators Doumit, Reardon, Prentice, Thibaudeau, Spanel, and Hargrove

3/13/03 NOT ADOPTED

1 Strike everything after the enacting clause and insert the
2 following:

3 "NEW SECTION **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that access to health
4 care services is an unavoidable need of all human beings, and that the
5 primary method used to pay for care is health insurance whether
6 financed by private or public funds. The cost of health care insurance
7 is rising at three times the rate of inflation, having a significant
8 impact on the solvency of state and local governments. Fourteen percent
9 of citizens nationally and about five hundred thousand citizens in the
10 state are without health care insurance. Employers, whether large or
11 small, public or private, are finding it increasingly difficult to find
12 and provide health care benefits to employees, with employees and their
13 families being forced to bear an increasing portion of this rising
14 health care insurance burden. Health care providers are struggling to
15 remain competitive in an increasingly complex market.

16 NEW SECTION **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to Chapter 48.21 RCW as
17 follows:

18 (1) A health care access options task force is created to be
19 composed of nineteen members appointed as follows:

20 (a) Twelve members are to be appointed jointly by the speaker of
21 the House of Representatives and the president of the Senate: (i) a
22 representative of a major state corporation, selected in consultation
23 with the Association of Washington Business; (ii) a representative of
24 small businesses, to be selected from a list of nominees submitted
25 jointly by the national federation of independent business and the
26 independent business association; (iii) two representatives of health
27 care consumers, one of whom shall represent people with individual
28 health insurance, and one of whom shall represent the interests of
29 people without health insurance; (iv) two representatives of organized
30 labor, one representing a trust that purchases insurance through a

1 Taft-Hartley plan, to be selected in consultation with the Washington
2 State Labor Council; (v) three members selected to represent health
3 care providers, including a hospital representative, a licensed
4 physician, and a rural health care provider, selected in consultation
5 with appropriate health care provider organizations; (vi) two
6 representatives of health insurance carriers; and (vii) the insurance
7 commissioner, who shall serve as the cochair of the task force and
8 shall, in addition, be responsible for coordinating its administrative
9 and ministerial duties. One of the health care consumer
10 representatives shall serve as the cochair of the task force, to be
11 elected by the members of the task force.

12 (b) Four members shall be selected to represent the Legislature, to
13 be chosen by each of the four caucuses.

14 (c) The Secretary of the Department of Social and Health Services,
15 the Secretary of the Department of Health, and the Administrator of the
16 Washington State Health Care Authority shall serve as ex officio
17 members of the task force.

18 (2) The health care access options task force shall examine the
19 privately funded health care insurance system in the State of
20 Washington and make recommendations for its improvement, emphasizing
21 the availability of health insurance for businesses with fewer than 51
22 employees. The underserved areas of Washington and the total aspect of
23 the delivery of health care in Washington, including telemedicine,
24 shall also be reviewed. The task force shall prepare a report of its
25 findings, including health insurance laws in other states that are
26 providing greater choice, more participating insurance carriers
27 offering health insurance, and greater price flexibility as compared to
28 Washington state. The task force shall seek testimony and information
29 from a broad range of health care stakeholders, and actively solicit
30 public comment in a community meeting process to build a consensus on
31 the values to be used as a guide to improving the privately and
32 publicly funded health care system. The task force shall review the
33 recommendations of previous health care system analyses. The task
34 force is authorized to establish subcommittees and technical advisory
35 committees as needed to carry out its responsibilities. The task force
36 shall seek grant funds for the community meeting process, and is
37 encouraged to coordinate its efforts with ongoing efforts such as those
38 of the Washington health foundation. The task force shall prepare a
39 report including its findings and recommendations and transmit this

1 report to the Legislature and the Governor no later than January 1,
2 2005."

3 --- END ---

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5 By Senator Doumit

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7 On page 1, on line 2 of the title, after "employees;", delete
8 everything through "and" on line 4.

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EFFECT: Creates task force to study health insurance needs with
emphasis on small businesses.