

SSB 5456 - S AMD 21  
By Senator Nelson

NOT ADOPTED 02/28/2017

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

3 "NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that medical debt  
4 is a significant problem impacting a person's ability to work,  
5 maintain their home, and provide for themselves and their families.  
6 The legislature further finds that understanding the causes and  
7 impacts of medical debt on Washington residents is an important first  
8 step in developing policy options to address this serious issue.

9 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** (1) A legislative task force on medical  
10 debt is established, with nine members appointed as follows:

11 (a) The president of the senate must appoint one member from each  
12 of the two largest caucuses of the senate;

13 (b) The speaker of the house of representatives must appoint one  
14 member from each of the two largest caucuses of the house of  
15 representatives;

16 (c) The director of the department of health or the director's  
17 designee;

18 (d) The attorney general or the attorney general's designee;

19 (e) A representative from an organization representing medical  
20 service providers, appointed by the chair or cochairs;

21 (f) A representative from an organization representing a  
22 nonprofit community organization, appointed by the chair or cochairs;  
23 and

24 (g) A representative of an organization that provides charity  
25 care, appointed by the chair or cochairs.

26 (2) The task force must:

27 (a) Choose a chair or cochairs from among its legislative  
28 membership at its initial meeting. The initial meeting must be called  
29 by agreement of a majority of the appointed members;

30 (b) Review the scope of medical debt in Washington including the  
31 major causes of medical debt, the issues and processes that occur

1 when medical debt goes to a collection agency, and how charity care  
2 and other services provide assistance to those in need;

3 (c) Provide any recommendations identified by the task force that  
4 involve statutory changes, funding recommendations, or administrative  
5 action to the legislature. If statutory changes are recommended, the  
6 task force must provide the recommendations in the form of draft  
7 legislation. Task force recommendations require the approval of a  
8 majority of the appointed members;

9 (d) Ensure that the task force provides ample opportunity for  
10 input from interested stakeholders.

11 (3) Staff support for the task force must be provided by the  
12 senate committee services and the house of representatives office of  
13 program research. The department of health must cooperate with the  
14 task force and provide information and assistance at the request of  
15 the task force.

16 (4) Legislative members of the task force are reimbursed for  
17 travel expenses in accordance with RCW 44.04.120. Nonlegislative  
18 members are not entitled to be reimbursed for travel expenses if they  
19 are elected officials or are participating on behalf of an employer,  
20 governmental entity, or other organization. Any reimbursement for  
21 other nonlegislative members is subject to chapter 43.03 RCW.

22 (5) The expenses of the task force must be paid jointly by the  
23 senate and the house of representatives. Task force expenditures are  
24 subject to approval by the senate facilities and operations committee  
25 and the house of representatives executive rules committee, or their  
26 successor committees.

27 (6) The task force must provide recommendations, if any, to the  
28 appropriate legislative committees, as described under subsection  
29 (2)(c) of this section and consistent with RCW 43.01.036, by November  
30 1, 2017.

31 (7) This section expires June 30, 2018."

32 On page 1, line 1 of the title, after "accounts;" strike the  
33 remainder of the title and insert "creating new sections; and  
34 providing an expiration date."

EFFECT: Establishes a joint legislative task force on medical  
debt consisting of 9 total members, 4 of which are appointed from  
each major caucus in the House of Representatives and the Senate, the  
Department of Health, the Office of the Attorney General, and a  
representative from a medical provider, a community group, and a  
charity care provider. The task force must examine the size and

causes of medical debt in Washington and develop recommendations by  
November 1, 2017.

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