

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6124

AS REPORTED BY COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & LONG-TERM CARE,
FEBRUARY 3, 1992

Brief Description: Providing for a long-term care ombudsman in counties over five hundred thousand.

SPONSORS: Senators Wojahn, Johnson, Gaspard, Niemi, Rasmussen and Madsen

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & LONG-TERM CARE

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators West, Chairman; Amondson, M. Kreidler, Niemi, and Wojahn.

Staff: Sarena Seifer (786-7417)

Hearing Dates: January 30, 1992; February 3, 1992

BACKGROUND:

State law authorizes an office of the state long-term care ombudsman within the Department of Community Development. The department currently contracts with a private nonprofit organization, also known as the state long-term care ombudsman, to provide long-term care ombudsman services to residents, patients and clients of long-term care facilities. The state long-term care ombudsman subcontracts for the services of regional ombudsmen in nine regions of the state which exclude Pierce, Snohomish, Kitsap, Yakima, Chelan, Grant, Skagit, Douglas, and Okanagan counties. Residents, patients and clients of long-term care facilities in these counties are served by the state long-term care ombudsman.

SUMMARY:

The Department of Community Development's contract for long-term care ombudsman services must require that long-term care ombudsmen are placed or are available throughout the state at locations convenient to long-term care facility patients, with at least one ombudsmen being located in each county with a population over 500,000.

The sum of \$50,000, or as much thereof as may be necessary, is appropriated from the general fund to the Department of Community Development Office of the state long-term care ombudsman for the purpose of the contract specified in the bill.

Appropriation: \$50,000

Revenue: none

Fiscal Note: available

TESTIMONY FOR:

Because they are accessible and convenient, local ombudsman programs are used more frequently than the statewide program. Local ombudsman services can often detect problems in long-term care facilities early and solve them successfully. Pierce County has more than 3,000 long-term care beds but no local ombudsman program. The problems that led to two Pierce County nursing homes entering into receivership in 1991 may have been caught early and resolved had there been a local ombudsman program present.

TESTIMONY AGAINST: None

TESTIFIED: Dan Fruichantie, Pierce County Resident Council (pro); Dessie Erb, Pierce County Resident Council (pro); Millie Gray, Manor Care Nursing Home (pro); Charles Lewis (pro); Jackie Coombs, Washington State Nursing Home Resident Council (pro); Amy Hanson, Washington State Nursing Home Resident Council (pro)