

SENATE BILL REPORT

ESHB 2257

As of June 4, 2003

Title: An act relating to the treatment of income and resources for institutionalized persons receiving medical assistance.

Brief Description: Concerning the treatment of income and resources for institutionalized persons receiving medical assistance.

Sponsors: House Committee on Appropriations (originally sponsored by Representatives Sommers, Fromhold and Moeller).

Brief History:

Staff: Tim Yowell (786-7435)

Background: When one spouse applies for Medicaid-funded long-term care in a nursing home or in the community, the other spouse is allowed to retain their home and its adjoining property; an automobile; all income in the non-applying spouse's name; such additional community income as is necessary to leave the non-applying spouse with about \$2,300 of monthly income; and an amount of additional assets. Under federal Medicaid rules, this additional asset amount which the non-applying spouse is allowed to keep must be at least \$18,132, but may not exceed \$90,660. Washington currently sets the spousal asset level at the \$90,660 federal maximum, as do about half of the states.

Summary of Bill: For couples applying for Medicaid-funded long-term care on or after August 1, 2003, the protected spousal asset amount shall be \$40,000. This amount shall be adjusted at the beginning of each biennium by the Consumer Price Index.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect on July 1, 2003.