

5591-S

Sponsor(s): Senate Committee on Technology & Communications (originally sponsored by Senators Schmidt, Poulsen, Reardon, Esser, B. Sheldon and Kohl-Welles; by request of Department of Social and Health Services)

Brief Description: Modifying provisions of the Washington telephone assistance program.

SB 5591-S - DIGEST

(DIGEST OF PROPOSED 1ST SUBSTITUTE)

Finds that: (1) It is in the public interest to take steps to mitigate the effects of these changes on low-income persons; and
(2) Advances in telecommunications technologies, such as community service voice mail provide new and economically efficient ways to secure many of the benefits of universal service to low-income persons who are not customers of local exchange telephone service.

Authorizes a discount on a community service voice mailbox that provides recipients with: (1) An individually assigned telephone number;

(2) The ability to record a personal greeting; and

(3) A secure private security code to retrieve messages.

Directs the department to enter into an agreement with the department of community, trade, and economic development for an amount not to exceed eight percent of the prior fiscal year's total revenue for the administrative and program expenses of providing community service voice mail services. The community service voice mail service may include toll-free lines in community action agencies through which recipients can access their community service voice mailboxes at no charge.