

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1631

As Reported by House Committee On: Health Care & Wellness

Title: An act relating to enacting planning measures to provide for the future long-term care services and supports needs of the aging population.

Brief Description: Concerning planning measures to provide long-term care services and supports needs of the aging population.

Sponsors: Representatives Tharinger, Johnson, Green, Harris, Cody, Riccelli, Jinkins, Morrell, Appleton, Hope, Maxwell, Pollet, Moscoso, Santos and Ryu.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Health Care & Wellness: 2/12/13, 2/15/13 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Establishes the Joint Legislative Executive Committee on Aging and Disability Issues to develop a strategy to prepare for the future demographic trends of the elderly and disabled populations and to build capacity for the future demands of those populations.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH CARE & WELLNESS

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 15 members: Representatives Cody, Chair; Jinkins, Vice Chair; Schmick, Ranking Minority Member; Hope, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Angel, Clibborn, Green, Harris, Manweller, Morrell, Riccelli, Ross, Short, Tharinger and Van De Wege.

Staff: Chris Blake (786-7392).

Background:

According to the Office of Financial Management's November 2012 Population Forecast there are currently approximately 830,000 people in Washington age 65 and over, or almost

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14 percent of the population. By 2040 that number is estimated to reach 1,860,000, or 21 percent of the population.

There have been several legislative committees that have studied the long-term care system in the past. The most recent of these efforts was the Task Force on Long-Term Care Financing and Chronic Care Management (Task Force) which released its findings in January 2008. The Task Force's report established several policy goals and recommendations relating to advance planning and access to long-term care information, aging in place, support for informal caregivers, long-term care financing, chronic care, falls prevention, and health information technology.

Summary of Bill:

The Joint Legislative Executive Committee on Aging and Disability Issues (Committee) is established. The Committee is responsible for profiling Washington's current elderly and disabled population and its needs and establishing an inventory of the available services and supports. The Committee must also establish a profile of the state's elderly and disabled population in 2025 and its needs and develop an anticipated inventory of future services and supports that will be needed to support these populations. Lastly, the Committee must develop a strategy of actions that the state may take to prepare for future demographic trends of the elderly and disabled populations and build the capacity to meet their demands.

Specifically, the strategy must identify:

- statutory and regulatory changes to promote the efficient use of resources;
- practices to promote the use of technology, chronic care management, and disability prevention programs;
- caregiver supports;
- specialized resources for populations with special needs; and
- housing and transportation programs to help persons who are elderly or disabled to maintain their independence.

The Committee is comprised of nine members. The members include the chairs of the legislative committees with jurisdiction over long-term care policy, one additional member from each of the two largest caucuses of the Senate, one additional member from each of the two largest caucuses of the House of Representatives, one member appointed by the Governor, one member appointed by the Secretary of the Department of Social and Health Services, and one member appointed by the Director of the Health Care Authority.

The Committee must report its findings and recommendations to the Governor and the appropriate committees of the Legislature by December 10, 2014.

Legislative findings are made regarding the aging of Washington's population and the need to plan for the growth of the number of seniors and people with disabilities by growing the workforce, resources, and quality long-term care services and supports, as well as identifying alternative long-term care financing options.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) The oldest of the baby boomers are starting to retire and the population is living longer which will result in 20 percent of Washington's population being over 65 years old by 2030. There is no place at the state level to plan for this huge demographic change. This bill will create a legislative executive committee to create real focused analysis across policy sectors such as health, long-term care, housing, and transportation. The next generation is the most unprepared ever as far as having the finances to retire. When planning is done for the future, things get done better for consumers at a lower cost. This bill could help people by providing extra information and support for caregivers. The aging of the population affects people with disabilities just the same as it affects everybody else. There are overlapping service systems in Washington that tend to work in silos and this bill links them through planning. The Great Recession took away much of the momentum that had been building around long-term care issues. Washington needs to figure out what the Affordable Care Act means for the aging population. This is a small investment in serious planning that can pay huge dividends down the road in planning for the age wave. This bill is about supporting families. There is a lot of misinformation with the public as to how prepare for their long-term care needs.

The bill should be amended to include a study of private and public long-term care financing options by the Office of Financial Management. The Health Care & Wellness Committee should add provisions for the aging and disability resource centers and the family caregiver support program which are cost-effective at making families more responsible for the care that they want to provide and stalling the use of more expensive Medicaid services.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Tharinger, prime sponsor; Ingrid McDonald, AARP; Dennis Mahar, Thurston County Area Agency on Aging; Jim Freeburg, Multiple Sclerosis Society; David Lord, Disability Rights Washington; Jerry Reilly, Elder Care Alliance; and Misha Werschkul, Service Employees International Union.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.