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**SENATE BILL 5118**

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**State of Washington 65th Legislature 2017 Regular Session**

**By** Senators Rolfes, Bailey, Darneille, Billig, Keiser, Kuderer, and Chase

AN ACT Relating to increasing the personal needs allowance for persons receiving state-financed care; adding a new section to chapter 74.09 RCW; creating a new section; providing an effective date; and declaring an emergency.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  (1) The legislature finds that through the medicaid program, state and federal government fund long-term care, mental health, and medical services for many elderly persons and people with disabilities, both in institutions and in community alternatives. The legislature also finds that a significant portion of these individuals' social security benefits is retained by the state to assist with the cost of their care. The legislature intends that these individuals retain for their own use a reasonable and modest personal needs allowance which may be used to purchase clothing, postage, barber services, travel, and other personal items not covered by their care setting, in order to promote their autonomy and personal dignity.

(2) It is the intent of the legislature to adjust the personal needs allowance annually to reflect cost-of-living adjustments to federal social security benefits for medicaid-eligible residents in institutions and community-based residential settings receiving long-term care, developmental disabilities, or mental health services.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 74.09 RCW to read as follows:

Effective July 1, 2017, and each fiscal year thereafter, subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this specific purpose, the personal needs allowance shall be adjusted for economic trends and conditions by increasing the allowance by the percentage cost-of-living adjustment for old-age, survivors, and disability social security benefits as published by the federal social security administration. However, in no case shall the personal needs allowance exceed the maximum personal needs allowance permissible under the federal social security act.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  Section 2 of this act is necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, or safety, or support of the state government and its existing public institutions, and takes effect July 1, 2017.

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