

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 5672

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As Reported by Senate Committee On:  
Health & Long-Term Care, February 21, 2025

**Title:** An act relating to delaying the home care aide certification requirements.

**Brief Description:** Delaying the home care aide certification requirements.

**Sponsors:** Senators Muzzall, Cleveland, Chapman, Dozier and Nobles.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Health & Long-Term Care: 2/18/25, 2/21/25 [DP].

**Brief Summary of Bill**

- Requires the Department of Health to adopt rules allowing long-term care workers additional time to become certified as the State Auditor's Office completes their 2026 Initiative 1163 performance audit and provides recommendations for the Legislature's consideration.
- Exempts long-term care workers from being required to be certified as a home care aide within 200 days of the hiring date.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & LONG-TERM CARE

**Majority Report:** Do pass.

Signed by Senators Cleveland, Chair; Orwall, Vice Chair; Muzzall, Ranking Member; Bateman, Chapman, Christian, Harris, Holy, Riccelli, Robinson and Slatter.

**Staff:** Julie Tran (786-7283)

**Background:** Long-Term Care Workers. A long-term care worker is any person who provides paid, hands-on personal care services for older persons or persons with disabilities. The term includes individual providers of home care services, direct care workers employed

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by home care agencies, providers of home care services to people with developmental disabilities, direct care workers in assisted living facilities and adult family homes, and respite care providers. The term excludes employees of several types of health care and residential care facilities, as well as care providers not paid by the state or by a private agency or facility licensed to provide personal care services.

Most long-term care workers must become certified as home care aides within 200 days of being hired by Department of Health (DOH) unless an exemption applies. To become certified as a home care aide, a long-term care worker must complete 75 hours of training, pass a certification examination, and pass state and federal background checks.

Initiative 1163. Initiative 1163 (I-1163), passed by the people of Washington in 2011, increased training requirements and competency assessments for personal care aides. There are no federal requirements for training and testing personal care aides—the federal designation for Washington’s home care aides. States have broad discretion in this area, and Washington’s requirements are among the most stringent in the country.

Under the initiative, becoming certified as a home care aide requires an applicant to pass a two-part test. The knowledge portion focuses on the activities of daily living and proper treatment of clients. During the skills portion, the applicant must demonstrate correct performance of skills such as safely transitioning a client from a bed to a wheelchair and properly cleaning a catheter.

**Summary of Bill:** DOH must adopt rules to allow long-term care workers additional time to become certified as the Office of the State Auditor completes their biennial performance audit as a part of I-1163 on training requirements and competency assessments for home care aides and provide recommendations for the Legislature's consideration.

Long-term care workers are exempt from the requirement to become certified as a home care aide within the 200 calendar days after the hiring date.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members:** No.

**Effective Date:** Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:** PRO: The state faces an aging population and this workforce is going to be in high demand. There have been numerous challenges and barriers in obtaining the home care aide certification. There have been delays and due to the 200-day certification requirement, there are individuals who have had to be fired and then rehired again to reset the hiring date. Addressing these barriers is crucial as the delays are

forcing providers to remove trained caregivers and disrupting the services that residents need while also creating unnecessary turnover in a profession that relies on stability and consistency. There needs to be a review of the entire system and an evaluation of whether the certification is meeting the objectives. This bill alone does not resolve all the issues that need to be fixed and create a truly efficient system. An audit by the State Auditor's Office can provide an analysis of whether the state is accomplishing the goals that have been set out or if there needs to be a different approach.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Senator Ron Muzzall, Prime Sponsor; Amy Thomas, Adult Family Home Council; Allison Lally, Brookdale Senior Living; Alyssa Odegaard.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:** No one.