

Human Services Committee

MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, March 18, 2021

10:00 AM in Zoom and YouTube Live

The meeting was called to order at 10:04 by Chairman, Rep. Abercrombie C. 083.

The following committee members were present:

Senators: Berthel E. S32; Cabrera J. S17; Lesser M. S09; Moore M. S22

Representatives: Abercrombie C. 083; Arora H. 151; Buckbee B. 067; Butler L. 072; Case J. 063; Cook M. 065; Dathan L. 142; Garibay J. 060; Goupil C. 035; Hughes A. 135; Mastrofrancesco G. 080; Santiago H. 084; Simmons C. 144; Stallworth C. 126; Wood T. 141

Absent were:

Senators:

Representatives:

Rep. Abercrombie made opening remarks.

Rep. Abercrombie announced that the chairs would be holding S.B. 955 in order to have time to review the new JFS language.

Item #1: HB 6317, An Act Prohibiting Discharges From Nursing Homes and Residential Care Homes To Temporary Or Unstable Housing.

Rep. Abercrombie asked for a motion to JFS to the floor. The motion was made by Rep. Case and seconded by Rep. Dathan.

Discussion:

Rep. Mastrofrancesco asked if the bill seeks to prohibit nursing homes from discharging residents to homeless shelters.

Rep. Abercrombie confirmed that it was the intention of the bill.

Rep. Mastrofrancesco asked if nursing homes are currently allowed to discharge residents to homeless shelters or unstable housing.

Rep. Abercrombie answered they are currently not allowed to do so. She commented that residential care homes seem to be doing this more often, and this bill seeks to tighten the statute to ensure that all people are released to a stable housing environment. In the bill, the word 'health' is used instead of 'safety' because it is already defined. She also explained that the language was changed to remove the requirement of an inspection prior to discharge because there is not enough staff.

Rep. Mastrofrancesco questioned the need for the bill if nursing homes are already required to have discharge plans.

Rep. Abercrombie explained the bill further. She mentioned occurrences where residential care homes released patients without knowing where they were going. In cases where an individual does not have family members to advocate on their behalf, there is a chance they could end up in a homeless shelter. She also explained that the bill tightens up some of the discharge orders, to make sure the patient has access to the services they need.

Rep. Mastrofrancesco re-stated her concern about the need for the bill if discharge plans are already required. She asked who would pay for an individual's continuous care at a nursing home if they were unable to be released due to their lack of stable housing.

Rep. Abercrombie believes the nursing home would be responsible for that individual.

Marie Grady, LCO, commented that the individual would most likely be eligible for Medicaid. The statute was amended to specify that an individual may not be discharged to a homeless shelter or temporary housing situation where they have no right to live long-term. She also explained that the statute now clarifies that if an individual requires a personal care assistant, they must have access to one upon discharge.

Rep. Mastrofrancesco asked if Medicaid would pay for an individual's prolonged stay if they could not be discharged due to unstable housing.

Marie Grady clarified that Medicaid only covers medically necessary care.

Rep. Mastrofrancesco asked what happens in a situation where a nursing home is full because there are residents that no longer need skilled nursing but cannot be discharged?

Rep. Abercrombie said that nursing homes in the state almost never reach full occupancy.

Rep. Mastrofrancesco commented that her concerns include: a bed potentially not being available for a senior who truly needs the care, and the cost to nursing homes for the continued care of an individual who cannot be discharged safely.

Rep. Abercrombie commented that the state has approximately 220 nursing homes and there will always be a place for seniors who need the care.

Rep. Abercrombie asked the Clerk to call the roll. The motion passed with 17 voting yea and 2 voting nay.

Rep. Abercrombie asked for a motion to create a consent calendar by a voice vote. The motion was made by Rep. Wood and seconded by Rep. Case. The motion passed with no objections.

Item #2: HB 6470, An Act Concerning Home Health, Telehealth and Utilization Review, JFS to the Floor.

Rep. Case asked that the bill be moved to the Consent Calendar.

Item #3: HB 6446, An Act Concerning The Governor's Budget Recommendations For Human Services, JFS to the Floor.

Rep. Case asked that the bill be moved to the Consent Calendar.

Item #4: SB 955, An Act Concerning Outdated Department of Social Services Statutes

Rep. Abercrombie stated that this bill is a hold.

Item #5: HB 6520, An Act Concerning The Provision Of Temporary State Services To Victims of Domestic Violence, JFS to the Floor.

Rep. Case asked that the bill be moved to the Consent Calendar.

Item #6: SB 981, An Act Concerning Payment Parity For Health And Human Services Providers, JF to the Floor.

Rep. Case asked that the bill be moved to the Consent Calendar.

Item #7: HB 6560, An Act Concerning Timely Payments To Personal Care Attendants, JFS to the Floor.

Rep. Case asked that the bill be moved to the Consent Calendar.

Rep. Abercrombie asked the Clerk to call the roll. The consent calendar passed with 19 voting yea and 0 voting nay.

Rep. Abercrombie announced that the final public hearing will be on Thursday, March 25<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 AM. She mentioned that interpreters will be available for the deaf community, and they will testify directly after public officials. There will be a committee meeting to JF the remaining bills on Tuesday, March 30<sup>th</sup> 10:00 AM. Rep. Abercrombie gave her thanks to the entire committee. Rep. Case and Sen. Berthel thanked the leadership of the committee.

Rep. Abercrombie noted that votes would remain open until 2:00 PM.

The meeting was recessed at 10:28 AM.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:00 PM.

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Gianna Vollano  
Assistant Clerk

Heather Ferguson-Hull  
Committee Clerk