



Hundredth Legislature - First Session - 2007
Introducer's Statement of Intent
LB 666

Chairperson: Joel Johnson
Committee: Health and Human Services
Date of Hearing: February 21, 2007

The following constitutes the reasons for this bill and the purposes which are sought to be accomplished thereby:

LB 666 provides intent language stating that legislative action is needed to aid individuals with psychiatric disabilities to maintain their eligibility for federal benefits during incarceration and, upon release, to enable them to access federal benefit programs (Medicaid, Supplemental Security Income program and Social Security Disability Insurance) for which they are eligible, to obtain temporary health care coverage and income support while receipt of federal benefits is pending, and to receive mental health services including case management, medication and substance abuse services. It is also designed to insure that upon release from incarceration individuals with psychiatric disabilities are connected to community-based mental health services.

The bill provides that incarcerated individuals with psychiatric disabilities shall be given access upon release to services under the medical assistance program established by the Medical Assistance Act and that they shall be provided with a 30 day supply of any psychiatric medications they were taking prior to release. LB 666 requires the Department of Correctional Services and the Department of Health and Human Services to identify and assist individuals with psychiatric disabilities and to offer assistance in filling out applications and getting such individuals connected to programs for which they are eligible. The bill provides for a process by which an incarcerated individual with psychiatric disabilities can apply for a temporary Medicaid card which will assist them in obtaining services upon their release.

LB 666 provides that these individuals shall be provided with a photo ID before being released from incarceration with the ID listing an address other than a correctional facility. The bill states that case management services shall be provided well in advance of release--if possible, at least 90 days before release. It provides that a case manager will work with the individual to arrange for shelter, mental health services and other support as well as helping to access federal benefit programs for which the person is eligible so that they have access to community services upon their release.

The intent of the bill is to help insure that individuals with psychiatric disabilities receive the assistance necessary to manage their lives upon release from a correctional facility.

Principal Introducer:

Senator Dwite Pedersen