

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## HB 1741

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**As Reported by House Committee On:**  
Health Care

**Title:** An act relating to health care benefits for blind vendors.

**Brief Description:** Providing a plan of health insurance for blind vendors.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Hunt, Fromhold, Alexander and Armstrong.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:**

Health Care: 2/15/01, 2/22/01 [DPS].

**Brief Summary of Substitute Bill**

- The Public Employee' Benefits Board will provide health insurance benefits for blind licensees who are actively operating facilities and participating in the business enterprises program.

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### HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH CARE

**Majority Report:** The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 13 members: Representatives Campbell, Republican Co-Chair; Cody, Democratic Co-Chair; Schual-Berke, Democratic Vice Chair; Skinner, Republican Vice Chair; Ballasiotes, Conway, Darneille, Edmonds, Edwards, Marine, McMorris, Pennington and Ruderman.

**Staff:** Dave Knutson (786-7146).

**Background:**

The Public Employees' Benefits Board designs and approves health insurance benefit plans for state employees, school district employees, and retirees.

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**Summary of Substitute Bill:**

Blind licensees who operate facilities and participate in the business enterprise program

are eligible for health insurance offered by the Public Employees' Benefits Board. The health insurance benefits will be the same or substantially similar to the plan of health insurance offered to state employees. The costs of providing health insurance for blind licensees will be paid from net proceeds from vending machine operations in public buildings.

**Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:**

Enrollment will be at the discretion of the blind licensees under rules adopted by the Public Employees' Benefits Board.

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**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

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

**Testimony For:** Blind licensees who operate facilities and participate in the Business Enterprise Program have a difficult time finding and paying for health insurance.

**Testimony Against:** None.

**Testified:** Representative Hunt, prime sponsor; Jeanne Gallo, Department of Services for the Blind; Larry Watkinson, Business Enterprise Program; and Jamila Thomas-Roberts, Washington Federation of State Employees.