

SUBJECT: Continuing health insurance coverage for certain part-time college students

COMMITTEE: Insurance — favorable, without amendment

VOTE: 9 ayes — Smithee, Van de Putte, Averitt, Bonnen, Burnam, Eiland, G. Lewis, Olivo, Wise

0 nays

WITNESSES: None

DIGEST: HB 864 would require health benefit plans providing coverage for full-time college students who are over 21 as dependents under their parents' policy to continue coverage for a certain period of time if the student dropped to less than full-time status. The plan would have to continue coverage for the remainder of the academic term and 10 days into the next term, and then could terminate coverage if the child did not return to full-time student status. Full-time student status would be determined in the manner provided by the educational institution at which the child is enrolled.

HB 864 would apply only to policies delivered, issued for delivery, or renewed on or after January 1, 1998.

SUPPORTERS SAY: HB 864 would ensure that full-time college students who reduce their course load or temporarily drop out of school are not penalized by being removed from their parents' insurance policy. The bill is closely tailored to apply to very limited situations in which students who temporarily change their full-time student status unknowingly lose their health care coverage. The bill would prevent a scenario in which a student is forced to drop out of college because of an illness, then loses health insurance coverage just when it is needed most.

OPPONENTS SAY: HB 864 should provide some sort of notice requirement so that policyholders and their children know exactly when coverage would end if the student were to reduce credit hours or drop out altogether.