

SENATE BILL SUMMARY

Prepared by the Division of Legislative Information for the Senate Bill **AS ORIGINALLY FILED**. For more detail, see Senate Bill Analyses, if available, prepared by the Senate's professional committee staff.

SB 714 Registry for Companions by Senator Wilson

Creates the "Florida Companion Registry Act." Defines "state-registered companions" as two adults who meet the requirements for valid state-registered companion status and who have been issued a certificate of state-registered companions by the Secretary of State. Provides eligibility requirements for such companion status including, but not limited to, both persons must inhabit the same residence of common, both must be at least 18 years of age, and neither may be married or registered with the state as a companion to another person.

Creates the Florida Companion Registry within the Department of State. Provides for automatic termination of state-registered companion agreements and procedures for voluntary termination of said agreements. Provides for notice to the Office of Vital Statistics.

Provides that a registered companion agreement created by a subdivision of the state is not a state-registered companion agreement for purposes of the Florida Companion Registry. Requires that the subdivisions of the state that use the state's definition of a state-registered companion for the purpose of companion benefits must allow the state registration certificate to satisfy any registration requirements. Provides that the act does not affect companion relationship registrations created by any public entity.

Provides that state-registered companions have the same visitation rights as spouses in specified health care facilities.

Provides that state-registered companion status is not the substantial equivalent of a marriage.

Revises provisions relating to service of process to include applicability to state-registered companions.

Provides for payment of specified payroll deductions for the purchase of United States securities to a state-registered companion of a deceased state or county officer or employee.

Provides for payment of wages or unemployment compensation to a state-registered companion of a deceased employee.

Revises provisions relating to hospital records to include applicability to state-registered companions.

Includes state-registered companions in the term "family" for purposes of provisions relating to nursing homes.

Revises provisions relating to funeral and cemetery services to include state-registered companions among those authorized to make decisions.

Revises provisions relating to health care decisionmaking for incapacitated or developmentally disabled patients to authorize decisionmaking by state-registered companions with the same level of priority as spouses.

Revises provisions relating to anatomical gifts to include state-registered companions among those not authorized to modify or prevent a donor's wish to make such a gift.

Permits state-registered companions to consent to autopsies.

Includes state-registered companions within the list of persons whose relationships to specified persons allow challenge to their service as jurors or grand jurors. (See bill for details)