



Standing Committee Report Summary

The Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Bill, 2007

Standing Committee on Social Justice and Empowerment (2007-08)

- The Standing Committee on Social Justice and Empowerment (2007-08) submitted its 28th Report on ‘The Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Bill, 2007’ of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment to the Fourteenth Lok Sabha on September 6th, 2007. The Chairperson of the Committee is Smt. Sumitra Mahajan.
- The full report is 77 pages. The report includes sections on the reasons for the legislation, the benefits of the legislation, the consultations with non-governmental organisations and experts, and recommendations. The report also includes the original bill and the minutes of the standing committee meetings. This summary includes the key recommendations made by the committee.
- Currently the term ‘welfare’ is undefined in the Bill. The Committee recommends that the Ministry define the term ‘welfare’ as used in the bill. It suggests the definition ‘provision of food, health care, recreation centres, and other amenities necessary for the well being of the senior citizens.’
- The Bill assigns the implementation of the legislation to the States. The Committee suggests that the Government play an ‘active role’ to implement the maintenance tribunals in a time-bound manner. They also state that role of the union government should be defined specifically in the Bill.
- The Committee recommends that the state of Jammu and Kashmir be included in the application of this Bill.
- In order to provide a ‘simple, inexpensive and speedy’ mechanism for parents to claim maintenance, the Committee believes the phrase ‘as far as possible be disposed of within 90 days’ may delay the application procedure. It suggests replacing the clause with a much more specific phrase.
- The Committee believes that the states do not have adequate resources to carry out the implementation of the Act. The Committee, therefore, recommends that grants-in-aid be given to the State Governments for setting up Tribunals and Appellate Tribunals and for creation of related infrastructure, as well as for old-age homes.
- The Government should stipulate a specific time period, (six months) for setting up the Tribunals and Appellate Tribunals from the date the Act comes into force.
- The Committee also recommended the Government develop a long-term plan to establish adequate old age homes, to include recreation centres at each old age home, and that the old age homes be close to orphanages.
- The Committee recommends the inclusion of a clause that would make all senior citizens covered under Group Health Insurance.
- The Committee also recommends that the government make it a statutory obligation for states to disburse uniform and adequate old age pension to all senior citizens. .

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