H-2089.1

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**HOUSE BILL 1987**

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**State of Washington 67th Legislature 2022 Regular Session**

**By** Representatives Morgan, Macri, Berry, Fitzgibbon, Gregerson, Ryu, Wicks, Santos, Pollet, Bateman, and Valdez

AN ACT Relating to a task force on creating a new state housing and homelessness department; creating new sections; and providing an expiration date.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  The legislature finds that affordable housing and homelessness are some of the most pressing issues facing Washington state today. These issues are not isolated to any one part of our state, rather they are challenges being faced by every jurisdiction across the state.

The legislature finds a need for a more holistic approach to housing and homelessness issues and a need to better align state policies across agencies and in partnership with local jurisdictions and community-based programs to achieve this.

Therefore, the legislature intends to establish a task force to recommend an organizational structure for a new department focused solely on issues of housing and homelessness. The task force will create a blueprint for a new department to better align housing and homelessness programs that currently span across multiple agencies and partners.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  (1) A legislative task force on creating a new state housing and homelessness department is established to consist of the following members:

(a) The president of the senate shall appoint one member from each of the two largest caucuses of the senate;

(b) The speaker of the house of representatives shall appoint one member from each of the two largest caucuses of the house of representatives;

(c) A representative of the office of the governor;

(d) The director of the department of commerce or the director's designee;

(e) The secretary of the department of social and health services or the secretary's designee;

(f) The director of the health care authority or the director's designee;

(g) The director of the office of equity or the director's designee;

(h) The state treasurer or the state treasurer's designee;

(i) The attorney general or the attorney general's designee;

(j) The executive director of the housing finance commission or the executive director's designee;

(k) One representative of the office of civil legal aid;

(l) One representative of the administrative office of the courts; and

(m) The following members to be appointed jointly by the president of the senate and the speaker of the house of representatives:

(i) One representative of the nonprofit housing development industry;

(ii) One representative of an organization that represents tenants;

(iii) One representative of homeless shelter operators;

(iv) One representative of low-income persons;

(v) One representative of special needs populations;

(vi) One representative of public housing authorities as created under chapter 35.82 RCW;

(vii) One representative of the for-profit housing development industry;

(viii) One representative of for-profit rental housing owners;

(ix) Two representatives of the Washington state association of counties, with one representative from a county that is located east of the crest of the Cascade mountains; and

(x) Two representatives of the association of Washington cities, with one representative from a city that is located east of the crest of the Cascade mountains.

(2) The task force shall choose its chair from among the legislative membership. The director of the department of commerce shall convene the initial meeting of the task force.

(3) The task force shall review and make recommendations on the following issues:

(a) A state organizational structure to best coordinate state housing and homelessness policy and funding, including:

(i) A clear mission and vision for the new department;

(ii) The organizational structure for the new department, including which agencies, administrations, commissions, or other functions of state government should be included;

(iii) Estimated costs for the reorganization, including information technology and capital;

(iv) A clear process for managing the reorganization; and

(v) Measurable benchmarks by which the effectiveness of the new housing department would be assessed;

(b) The feasibility of the state building its own housing portfolio and partnering with public housing authorities to operate state housing stock;

(c) The need for a state eviction prevention office; and

(d) How the state may subsidize housing choice vouchers issued under 42 U.S.C. Sec. 1437(f) when fair market rents calculated by the federal department of housing and urban development do not keep pace with rent.

(4) Staff support for the task force shall be provided by the department of commerce. The department of commerce shall cooperate with the task force and provide information as the chair may reasonably request.

(5) The task force may meet virtually. Legislative members of the task force are reimbursed for travel expenses in accordance with RCW 44.04.120. Nonlegislative members are not entitled to be reimbursed for travel expenses if they are elected officials or are participating on behalf of an employer, governmental entity, or other organization. Any reimbursement for other nonlegislative members is subject to chapter 43.03 RCW.

(6) The expenses of the task force shall be paid jointly by the senate and the house of representatives. Task force expenditures are subject to approval by the senate facilities and operations committee and the house executive rules committee, or their successor committees.

(7) The task force shall submit a preliminary report with its findings and recommendations to the governor and the appropriate committees of the legislature by November 10, 2022, and a final report by November 10, 2023.

(8) This section expires December 31, 2023.

**--- END ---**