

# HOUSE BILL ANALYSIS

## HB 1049

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**Background:** The Legislature enacted the Washington Housing Policy Act in 1993. One provision of the act prohibits counties and cities from enacting or maintaining an ordinance, zoning regulation, or policy which treats a residential structure occupied by persons with handicaps differently than a similar residential structure occupied by a family or other unrelated individuals.

**Summary:** The Legislature finds that in order to carry out the Washington Housing Policy Act and to facilitate the mainstreaming of persons with disabilities into local communities, group homes should be integrated throughout communities and not clustered in neighborhoods that recreate an institutional environment.

Counties, cities, and towns may regulate the dispersion of group homes in residential neighborhoods. Any ordinance that regulates the dispersion of group homes must ensure that persons with disabilities are assisted in their efforts to secure appropriate housing and that only the clustering of group homes is limited. Group homes are exempt from dispersion ordinances if the group homes were previously clustered. Any regulation must provide for reasonable accommodations to afford persons with handicaps equal opportunity to use and enjoy a dwelling.

A group home is a residential facility that accommodates persons with disabilities or medically frail individuals, who require a combination or sequence of special interdisciplinary or generic care, medical treatment, treatment for recovering drug addicts and alcoholics, or other related services that are individually planned and coordinated in a group home to allow the person to function as independently as possible in a residential neighborhood.