

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1892

As Reported By House Committee On:
Children & Family Services

Title: An act relating to hunger in Washington.

Brief Description: Providing for a hunger survey project.

Sponsors: Representatives Kagi and D. Sommers.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Children & Family Services: 2/15/99, 2/25/99 [DPA].

<p>Brief Summary of Bill</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">· Directs the Department of Health to conduct a hunger survey.
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HOUSE COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICES

Majority Report: Do pass as amended. Signed by 9 members: Representatives D. Sommers, Republican Co-Chair; Tokuda, Democratic Co-Chair; Kagi, Democratic Vice Chair; Campbell; Carrell; Dickerson; Eickmeyer; Kastama and Pflug.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 1 member: Representative Boldt, Republican Vice Chair.

Staff: Marilee Scarbrough (786-7196).

Background: In 1991, the Legislature passed an omnibus anti-hunger and nutrition bill that outlined provisions for addressing issues of hunger in Washington state. The legislation increased participation in the supplemental food program for women, infants and children, expanded the emergency food assistance program to provide additional support for the operation of food banks and increased school based nutrition programs.

A recent Department of Social and Health Services report, "Washington's TANF Single Parent Families After Welfare" found that 33 percent of interviewed families cut meal size, 16 percent skipped meals and 8 percent went without food at least one day due to insufficient resources. The goal of a survey is to provide policy makers with reliable information on the effectiveness of the hunger initiatives passed in 1991 and the current status of hunger in the general population.

Summary of Amended Bill:

The Department of Health will administer and coordinate a hunger survey. The survey will determine: the prevalence of hunger in the total population and among low income families; and the characteristics of hungry families and the methods used by hungry families to cope with shortages. Additionally, the Department of Health will consult with the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction to determine whether students are given sufficient time to be served and to eat school meals.

The Department of Health will provide a final report to the appropriate legislative committees by December 1, 2000. A total of \$200,000 is requested for the project. \$125,000 is requested for the first year of the biennium, and \$75,000 for the second year of the biennium.

Amended Bill Compared to Original Bill: The amended bill added that the Department of Health survey determine whether students in school meal programs are allowed sufficient time to be served and to eat their meals.

Appropriation: The sum of \$200,000.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date of Amended Bill: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: This information is needed to determine the status of hungry families in Washington. This survey would help to implement the USDA Food Security survey at the state level. This is a good bill, we support it. Funding the survey will allow the state to leverage its dollars, because the federal government has matching grants available. Hunger impacts the growth and development of children; it is crucial to determine the extent and dimensions of the problem in our state. We can only address the problem after we have accurate data.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: (In support) Bob Cooper, Food Lifeline; Linda Stone, Children's Alliance; Julie Graham, Voices; Bonnie Roberts, Voices; Tony Lee, Washington Welfare Reform Coalition; and Paul Oldenkamp.

(Answered member's questions) John Atherton, Department of Social and Health Services.