

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 5156

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As Passed Senate, March 3, 1999

**Title:** An act relating to voluntary expansion of local housing authority boards of commissioners to comply with federal law.

**Brief Description:** Amending housing authority law.

**Sponsors:** Senators Prentice and Winsley.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Commerce, Trade, Housing & Financial Institutions: 2/2/99, 2/4/99 [DP].

Passed Senate, 3/3/99, 47-0.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, TRADE, HOUSING & FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS

**Majority Report:** Do pass.

Signed by Senators Prentice, Chair; Shin, Vice Chair; Benton, Deccio, Gardner, Hale, Rasmussen, T. Sheldon, West and Winsley.

**Staff:** David Pringle (786-7448)

**Background:** Housing authorities may be formed in any city or county that has a shortage of safe and sanitary housing for low-income residents. Housing authorities are led by a board of commissioners appointed by city councils, mayors or county commissioners. Most authorities are limited to five board members; however, boards in large cities such as Seattle have seven. Seven-member boards must contain two commissioners that reside in housing authority projects.

The Quality Housing and Work Responsibility Act of 1998 revised federal law governing public housing. The act requires that one local housing authority board commissioner be a recipient of housing services.

**Summary of Bill:** If federal law requires that local housing authority boards contain one member who is directly assisted by the authority, a five-member board may increase its size to six members. The board may determine the length of term of the directly assisted member, and such a person may serve only so long as he or she is being assisted.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

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

**Testimony For:** This helps the housing authorities comply with federal law. There is no opposition because this is a friendly, permissive bill. There are four boards in the state that already meet the federal requirements but many do not. This will allow the noncompliant boards to adapt with minimal disruption and without losing members who have built up great expertise over time. No objections from tenants are expected from this change, and existing board members are welcoming the participation of more residents. Concerns about tie-breaking on the six-member boards can easily be dealt with locally.

**Testimony Against:** None.

**Testified:** Greg Pierce, Assn. of Washington Housing Authorities; Norman McLoughlin, Kitsap County Consolidated Housing Authority; John Collins, Commissioner, Vancouver Housing Authority.