

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5854

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Human Services & Corrections, February 23, 1999

Title: An act relating to hunger in Washington.

Brief Description: Providing for a hunger survey project.

Sponsors: Senators Hargrove, Prentice, Costa and Kohl-Welles.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Human Services & Corrections: 2/23/99 [DP-WM].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES & CORRECTIONS

Majority Report: Do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators Hargrove, Chair; Costa, Vice Chair; Franklin, Kohl-Welles, Long, Patterson and Zarelli.

Staff: Aldo Melchiori (786-7439)

Background: The United States Department of Agriculture reports that Washington ranks third in hunger in the nation. It has been suggested that to address Washington's hunger problem the Legislature must first understand its scope.

Summary of Bill: The Department of Health administers and coordinates the hunger survey project. The purpose of the project is to determine: the prevalence of hunger in the state, the characteristics of hungry families; the extent that anti-hunger resources are not meeting the needs of families; and the methods used by hungry families coping with food shortages along with the lessons learned.

Appropriation: \$125,000 is appropriated from the general fund for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2000, and \$75,000 for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2001.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: Even families with two working parents getting the minimum wage sometimes must rely on food banks for aid. The presence of hungry children demands a response. More information is needed to determine how to best serve the needs of hungry families coming from a wide variety of circumstances. Environmental legislation has contributed to the loss of living wage jobs in some areas of the state and resulted in more hungry families.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: PRO: Linda Stone, Children's Alliance; Bob Cooper, Food Lifeline; Randi Abrams, Jewish Federation.