
SUBSTITUTE HOUSE BILL 2113

State of Washington

64th Legislature

2015 Regular Session

By House Early Learning & Human Services (originally sponsored by Representatives Walkinshaw, Walsh, Kagi, Johnson, Appleton, Sawyer, Kilduff, Stanford, Jinkins, Zeiger, Santos, Ortiz-Self, Pollet, and Ormsby)

READ FIRST TIME 02/20/15.

1 AN ACT Relating to creating a legislative task force on poverty;
2 creating new sections; and providing an expiration date.

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

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** (1) The legislature recognizes that
5 poverty in Washington state is a reality for far too many of our
6 residents and recognizes the inherent dignity of every human being.
7 Poverty occurs statewide in rural, suburban, and urban areas and it
8 has only increased since the great recession of 2007. 14.1 percent of
9 the people live in poverty and of those people: 18.8 percent are
10 children; 21.5 percent are persons living with disabilities; and 8.1
11 percent are our elders. Sixty-four percent of those who are homeless
12 are persons of color.

13 (2) Poverty impacts a significant number of state programs and
14 services. A child who is homeless is eighty-seven percent more likely
15 to drop out of school. Temporary assistance for needy families
16 benefits for a family of three are four hundred seventy eight dollars
17 per month, thirty percent of the federal poverty level. The lack of
18 accessible housing remains a significant problem. Those living in
19 poverty suffer from greater health problems. The majority of persons
20 in our juvenile justice and corrections systems come from poverty.
21 Furthermore, income inequality continues to increase.

1 (3) The legislature recognizes that developing a state focused
2 plan of action toward reducing poverty would have a positive impact
3 on those living in poverty and state programs costs. A focused plan
4 of action would use state resources in a more efficient manner and
5 could potentially result in decreased needs. The convening of thought
6 leaders from across the public, private, and nonprofit sectors to
7 develop such a plan can lead to reductions in the number of persons
8 living in poverty.

9 (4) The legislature intends to establish a legislative task force
10 to develop such a plan.

11 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** (1)(a) A legislative task force on
12 poverty is established, with members as provided in this subsection.

13 (i) The president of the senate shall appoint one member from
14 each of the two largest caucuses of the senate.

15 (ii) The speaker of the house of representatives shall appoint
16 one member from each of the two largest caucuses of the house of
17 representatives.

18 (iii) The president of the senate and the speaker of the house of
19 representatives jointly shall appoint eleven members representing a
20 statewide cross-section of leaders in different roles in the private,
21 nonprofit, and public sectors.

22 (b) The task force shall choose an executive committee to lead
23 the task force. The task force may appoint subcommittees and develop
24 a process for including stakeholders in the work of the task force.

25 (2) The task force shall develop a comprehensive plan for more
26 effective and efficient poverty relief solutions through
27 identification of pathways out of poverty. System change, bringing
28 down funding barriers, recognizing the individualized approach to
29 create poverty relief, establishing goals, measuring outcomes, and
30 more must be included in the plan.

31 (3) Staff support for the task force must be provided by the
32 senate committee services and the house of representatives office of
33 program research.

34 (4) The task force shall meet quarterly.

35 (5) The task force shall report its initial findings to the
36 appropriate committees of the legislature by December 1, 2015. A
37 final report is due December 1, 2016.

1 (6) This section expires December 31, 2017.

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