

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1630

As Reported by House Committee On:
Early Learning & Human Services

Title: An act relating to allowing minors to consent to share their personally identifying information in the Washington homeless client management information system.

Brief Description: Allowing minors to consent to share their personally identifying information in the Washington homeless client management information system.

Sponsors: Representatives Slatter, McDonald, Senn, Dent, Kilduff, McBride, Frame, Jinkins, Kloba, Santos, Appleton, Muri, Fey, Doglio, Stanford and Kagi; by request of Washington State Department of Commerce.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Early Learning & Human Services: 2/8/17, 2/10/17 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Allows unaccompanied youth aged 13 and older to give consent for the collection of personally identifying information for the Washington Homeless Client Management Information System.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & HUMAN SERVICES

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 12 members: Representatives Kagi, Chair; Senn, Vice Chair; Dent, Ranking Minority Member; McDonald, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Frame, Goodman, Griffey, Klippert, Lovick, McCaslin, Muri and Ortiz-Self.

Staff: Dawn Eychaner (786-7135).

Background:

The 2015 Legislature established the Office of Homeless Youth Prevention and Protection Programs (Office) at the Department of Commerce (COM). The Office oversees programs serving unaccompanied and homeless youth and young adults up to age 24. These programs include HOPE centers, crisis residential centers (CRC), and street youth services.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

HOPE centers provide voluntary, temporary residential placements for street youth under the age of 18. Youth may self-refer to a HOPE center. A CRC is a short-term, semi-secure facility for runaway youth and adolescents in conflict with their families. A youth may stay in a CRC for up to 15 consecutive days. Street youth services provides services and housing through community-based outreach.

The COM collects data from homeless and housing service providers using the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). Providers who receive state or federal funds are required to use the HMIS to collect and manage client-level data. Providers may only collect personally identifying client information after obtaining informed consent from the individual, and the HMIS system must protect individual privacy.

Data in the HMIS is used to produce unduplicated counts of people experiencing homelessness, identify patterns of service use, and measure program effectiveness. The HMIS is also used as an online information and referral system for providers to connect clients with available housing and services.

Summary of Bill:

Any unaccompanied youth aged 13 or older may consent to have his or her personally identifying information collected for the purposes of the HMIS. The term "unaccompanied" is defined as a youth or young adult experiencing homelessness while not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) Collecting accurate and robust data is necessary to combat the problem of homelessness. This change will allow young people to provide consent to have their information collected to help us understand homelessness. Without this explicit authority, we are unable to effectively collect, measure, and evaluate data on youth homelessness and cannot match data with other public systems such as the Department of Social and Health Services child welfare or juvenile justice to look for overlap. A recent Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee study found ability to track outcomes is hindered by an inability to effectively collect data. Very little is known about youth under age 18 years accessing services and the effectiveness of those services for youth, and this runs counter to state directives to implement data-oriented delivery of services. This is a no-cost technical fix.

Young people on the street can't be counted if not entered into the HMIS, and if they're not counted, funds for services allocated to the programs they access will not be accurate. Anyone can fill out a form to revoke their consent and identifying information from the HMIS.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Slatter, prime sponsor; Kim Justice, Department of Commerce; Kira Zylstra, All Home King County; and Annie Blackledge, The Mockingbird Society.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.