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**SECOND SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 5718**

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**State of Washington**

**66th Legislature**

**2019 Regular Session**

**By** Senate Ways & Means (originally sponsored by Senators Saldaña, Hasegawa, Nguyen, O'Ban, Das, Keiser, Kuderer, and Zeiger)

READ FIRST TIME 03/01/19.

1 AN ACT Relating to establishing the child welfare housing  
2 assistance program that provides housing assistance to parents  
3 reunifying with a child and parents at risk of having a child  
4 removed; adding a new section to chapter 74.13 RCW; and providing an  
5 expiration date.

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

7 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** A new section is added to chapter 74.13  
8 RCW to read as follows:

9 (1) Beginning July 1, 2020, the department shall establish a  
10 child welfare housing assistance pilot program, which provides  
11 housing vouchers, rental assistance, navigation, and other support  
12 services to eligible families. The child welfare housing assistance  
13 pilot program is intended to shorten the time that children remain in  
14 out-of-home care.

15 (2) A parent with a child who is dependent pursuant to chapter  
16 13.34 RCW and whose primary remaining barrier to reunification is the  
17 lack of appropriate housing is eligible for the child welfare housing  
18 assistance pilot program.

19 (3) The department shall contract with an outside entity or  
20 entities to operate the child welfare housing assistance pilot  
21 program. If no outside entity or entities are available to operate

1 the program or specific parts of the program, the department may  
2 operate the program or the specific parts that are not operated by an  
3 outside entity.

4 (4) Families may be referred to the child welfare housing  
5 assistance pilot program by a caseworker, an attorney, a guardian ad  
6 litem as defined in chapter 13.34 RCW, a child welfare parent mentor  
7 as defined in RCW 2.70.060, an office of public defense social  
8 worker, or the court.

9 (5) The department shall consult with a stakeholder group that  
10 must include, but is not limited to, the following:

11 (a) Parent allies;

12 (b) Parent attorneys and social workers managed by the office of  
13 public defense parent representation program;

14 (c) The department of commerce;

15 (d) Housing experts;

16 (e) Community-based organizations;

17 (f) Advocates; and

18 (g) Behavioral health providers.

19 (6) The stakeholder group established in subsection (5) of this  
20 section shall begin meeting after the effective date of this section  
21 and assist the department in design of the child welfare housing  
22 assistance pilot program in areas including, but not limited to:

23 (a) Equitable racial, geographic, ethnic, and gender distribution  
24 of program support;

25 (b) Eligibility criteria;

26 (c) Creating a definition of homeless for purposes of eligibility  
27 for the program; and

28 (d) Options for program design that include outside entities  
29 operating the entire program or specific parts of the program.

30 (7) By December 1, 2021, the department shall report outcomes for  
31 the child welfare housing assistance pilot program to the oversight  
32 board for children, youth, and families established pursuant to RCW  
33 43.216.015. The report must include racial, geographic, ethnic, and  
34 gender distribution of program support.

35 (8) The child welfare housing assistance pilot program  
36 established in this section is subject to the availability of funds  
37 appropriated for this purpose.

38 (9) This section expires June 30, 2022.

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