

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HJM 4013

As Reported by House Committee On:
Housing

Brief Description: Petitioning for efforts to assist the state's homeless.

Sponsors: Representatives Miloscia, Springer, Sells, Pettigrew, Upthegrove, Simpson, Chase, Hasegawa, Kagi and Santos.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Housing: 2/22/05 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Petition to the Governor, county governments and Washington members of Congress to assist the state's homeless.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HOUSING

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 9 members: Representatives Miloscia, Chair; Springer, Vice Chair; Holmquist, Ranking Minority Member; Dunn, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; McCune, Ormsby, Pettigrew, Schindler and Sells.

Staff: Robyn Dupuis (786-7166).

Background:

There exists incomplete data related to the total number of homeless individuals in Washington and the number of homeless individuals who die every year due to illness related to their homeless status.

Public Health - Seattle and King County's Health Care for the Homeless Network, the Epidemiology, Planning and Evaluation Section of Public Health - Seattle and King County, the King County Medical Examiner's Office, the King County Council and others, conducted an intensive study related to homeless deaths in 2004 and published a number of statistics related to illness and death among King County's homeless. The study found that the majority of homeless individuals die young compared to the general population and suffer from multiple illnesses.

Other national and state studies highlight the growing number of homeless families with children and, in particular, detail the health and developmental issues faced by homeless children.

Summary of Bill:

The Executive Branch of the State of Washington and the legislative authorities of each county are requested to assist in promoting an effort to count and track homeless individuals and families, as well as to highlight and support programs that assist individuals and families secure decent, stable housing.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Testimony For: The numbers of homeless individuals dying in Washington, as reported in the King County study, is staggering and we know the same issue exists throughout the state. Something must be done to address this issue, we must be able to count and track these homeless individuals and prevent their untimely deaths due to illnesses that are caused at least in part by having to live outdoors for periods of time and in unsanitary conditions. As in the biblical story of Lazarus and the Rich Man, we are in the position to help others and it is our responsibility to do so.

Testimony Against: None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Miloscia, prime sponsor.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.