

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6573

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Ways & Means, February 26, 2014

Title: An act relating to changing the effective date of modifications to the aged, blind, and disabled and the housing and essential needs programs.

Brief Description: Changing the effective date of modifications to the aged, blind, and disabled and the housing and essential needs programs.

Sponsors: Senators Hargrove and Hill.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Ways & Means: 2/25/14, 2/26/14 [DP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Hill, Chair; Baumgartner, Vice Chair; Honeyford, Capital Budget Chair; Hargrove, Ranking Member; Keiser, Assistant Ranking Member on the Capital Budget; Ranker, Assistant Ranking Member on the Operating Budget; Becker, Billig, Braun, Conway, Dammeier, Hasegawa, Hatfield, Hewitt, Kohl-Welles, Padden, Parlette, Rivers, Schoesler and Tom.

Staff: Breann Boggs (786-7433)

Background: Aged, Blind, or Disabled Assistance Program. The Aged, Blind, or Disabled Assistance Program was established in 2011. Under this program, the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) provides financial assistance to persons who meet the income, resource, and incapacity standards, which include having a medical or mental health impairment that is likely to meet federal Supplemental Security Income (SSI) disability standards. The federal SSI standards include the requirement that an individual has a disability that is likely to continue for a minimum of 12 months and that prevents the individual from performing work that the individual was able to perform within the past 15 years. A person is not eligible for the Aged, Blind, or Disabled Assistance Program if there has been a final determination that the person is not eligible for federal SSI.

Chapter 10, 2013 Laws of 2nd Special Session modified the disability standard between January 1, 2014, and July 1, 2015, to include persons who have a bodily or mental infirmity

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that will likely continue for a minimum of nine months and prevent the individual from performing work that the individual was able to perform in the prior ten years and who is otherwise likely to meet the federal SSI standard. Effective January 1, 2015, the definition of disabled person reverts to the federal SSI standard, which defines a disability as an impairment that will likely continue for a minimum of 12 months and prevent the individual from performing work previously performed in the last 15 years.

Summary of Bill: Aged, Blind, or Disabled Assistance Program. The effective date of modifications that were made to the disability standard under Chapter 10, 2013 Laws of 2nd Special Session are changed. The modified disability standard will expire June 30, 2014, instead of June 30, 2015.

Effective January 1, 2014, until June 30, 2014, a disabled person is an individual who has a bodily or mental infirmity that will likely continue for a minimum of nine months and prevent the individual from performing work that the person was able to perform in the prior ten years and who is otherwise likely to meet the federal SSI standard. If a person is determined to be disabled by DSHS, that person may be eligible for the Aged, Blind, or Disabled Assistance Program.

Beginning July 1, 2014, a disabled person is one who is likely to meet the federal SSI standard, which includes a disability that will likely continue for a minimum of 12 months and prevent the individual from performing work previously performed in the last 15 years.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 25, 2014.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: The policy change in this bill makes sense. We tried to maximize federal drawdown and that was not successful. My concern is that the change will have an impact on the Housing and Essential Needs (HEN) program. When we move this population from eligibility for the Aged, Blind and Disabled (ABD) program, this population becomes eligible for HEN. This program has been very successful, but is operating at full capacity. Some of the savings from ABD should be reinvested in the HEN program to accommodate the new eligible population.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Robin Zukoski, Columbia Legal Services; Nick Federici, WA Low Income Housing Alliance.