

FINAL BILL REPORT

ESHB 1643

C 122 L 19
Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Concerning property ownership for participants in the address confidentiality program.

Sponsors: House Committee on State Government & Tribal Relations (originally sponsored by Representatives Doglio, Walsh, Dolan, Irwin, Orwall, Lovick, Macri, Appleton, Shewmake, Jinkins, Davis, Frame and Leavitt).

House Committee on State Government & Tribal Relations
House Committee on Appropriations
Senate Committee on State Government, Tribal Relations & Elections

Background:

The Address Confidentiality Program (ACP) protects people who are attempting to escape from domestic violence, sexual assault, trafficking, or stalking. The ACP helps preserve the confidentiality of a person's address by allowing the person to use a substitute mailing address designated by the Secretary of State (Secretary) for purposes of government records. In practice, an ACP participant receives a post office box (P.O. Box) address in Olympia to use on government documents. The Secretary forwards mail from the P.O. Box to the ACP participant's real address. More than 4,500 people are served by the ACP.

A person who wishes to participate in the ACP applies to the Secretary with a sworn statement that the applicant (or the minor or incapacitated person on whose behalf the application is made) is a victim of domestic violence, sexual assault, trafficking, or stalking and fears for his or her or his or her children's safety. An applicant may also be a criminal justice participant—e.g., a law enforcement officer, corrections officer, and prosecuting or defense attorney—who is the target of unlawful threats or harassment. Applicants may receive assistance from local agencies and nonprofits that provide counseling and shelter services to victims.

Other than the ACP participants' public address designated by the Secretary, participant files may not be disclosed, except by court order or to law enforcement in certain circumstances. Names of ACP participants are not included in lists of registered voters.

Summary:

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.

The Secretary must enter into an interagency agreement with the Office of Civil Legal Aid to develop and make available information, online self-help resources, and other free legal aid services to help ACP participants who wish to own property without publicly disclosing their address. These resources also must help participants purchase property in the name of a nonprofit to establish a safe house for other participants or for sex trafficking victims without public disclosure of their ownership. The Secretary and assisting agencies must publicize the availability of legal resources and assistance for these purposes.

Votes on Final Passage:

House	96	0
Senate	47	0

Effective: July 28, 2019