

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SSB 5441

As Reported by House Committee On:
Public Safety

Title: An act relating to rental vouchers to eligible offenders.

Brief Description: Extending rental vouchers for eligible offenders.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Ways & Means (originally sponsored by Senators Nguyen, Wilson, C., Darneille, Cleveland, Salomon, Randall, Hasegawa and Kuderer).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Public Safety: 3/25/19, 4/1/19 [DP].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Extends the period in which the Department of Corrections may provide rental vouchers to an offender qualifying for earned early release and transferring to community custody from three to six months.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 10 members: Representatives Goodman, Chair; Davis, Vice Chair; Sutherland, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Appleton, Graham, Griffey, Lovick, Orwall, Pellicciotti and Pettigrew.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 1 member: Representative Klippert, Ranking Minority Member.

Staff: Kelly Leonard (786-7147).

Background:

Offenders incarcerated in state correctional facilities may earn early release time for good behavior and good performance, with some exceptions and conditions. Certain offenders are also required to serve a term of community custody under the supervision of the Department of Corrections (DOC) following their release. Any offender who will serve a term of

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community custody must have an approved release plan in order to take advantage of earned early release time.

An offender's release plan must include a specific residence and living arrangements. The DOC can deny an offender's release plan if the plan places the community or victims at risk, violates the terms of supervision, or places the offender at risk to reoffend or violate the conditions of supervision. The offender remains in the state correctional facility, up to his or her original release date, until he or she obtains an approved release plan.

The DOC may provide rental vouchers to an offender for up to three months if those vouchers will result in an approved release plan. Vouchers must be provided in conjunction with additional transition support services. These include, but are not limited to, substance abuse treatment, mental health treatment, sex offender treatment, educational programming, or employment programming.

Summary of Bill:

Subject to a specific appropriation, the DOC may provide rental vouchers to an eligible offender for up to six months if those vouchers will result in an approved release plan.

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) Many individuals being released from prison are housing insecure. This is not a good situation for them or for the community. While there is a program for housing vouchers for a certain demographic, three months is insufficient. Expanding these vouchers for up to six months will go a long way to addressing housing insecurity, and it will improve reentry and reintegration.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Senator Nguyen, prime sponsor.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.