

HOUSE BILL REPORT

E2SHB 1115

As Passed House:
February 18, 2008

Title: An act relating to programs to end homelessness.

Brief Description: Creating programs to end homelessness.

Sponsors: By House Committee on Apps Subcom GG (originally sponsored by Representatives Miloscia, Pettigrew, Morrell, Ormsby, Green, Darneille, Haigh, Moeller, Wallace, Santos and Simpson).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Housing: 1/18/07, 2/7/07 [DPS];

Appropriations Subcommittee on General Government & Audit Review: 2/7/08[DP2S(w/o sub HOUS)].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 2/18/08, 66-29.

Brief Summary of Engrossed Second Substitute Bill

- Changes the name of the Homeless Housing and Assistance Act to the Ending Homelessness Act.
- Establishes a new goal of reducing homelessness by 70 percent by 2015 and ending homelessness by 2018.
- Adds additional planning, reporting and evaluation requirements.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HOUSING

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 5 members: Representatives Miloscia, Chair; Springer, Vice Chair; Kelley, McCune and Ormsby.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 1 member: Representative Schindler.

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.

Staff: Robyn Dupuis (786-7166).

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE ON GENERAL GOVERNMENT & AUDIT REVIEW

Majority Report: The second substitute bill be substituted therefor and the second substitute bill do pass and do not pass the substitute bill by Committee on Housing. Signed by 10 members: Representatives Linville, Chair; Ericks, Vice Chair; Armstrong, Ranking Minority Member; Blake, Lantz, Lias, Miloscia, Morris, Nelson and Van De Wege.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 4 members: Representatives Skinner, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Alexander, Chandler and Kretz.

Staff: Owen Rowe (786-7391).

Background:

The Legislature enacted the Homeless Housing and Assistance Act in 2005, the goal of which was to reduce homelessness by 50 percent statewide and in each county by 2015. Thirty-seven counties participate in this program. The program was funded by a \$10 surcharge on recorded documents, 60 percent of which remained to be used within the county of origin. In 2007, the Legislature authorized an additional \$8 surcharge for this program (90 percent stays with the counties). The portion of the surcharge funds remitted to the state is deposited into the Home Security Fund.

Summary of Engrossed Second Substitute Bill:

The name of the Homeless Housing and Assistance Act is changed to the Ending Homelessness Act. The names of the program, plans, task forces, and accounts are changed respectively. The goal of the program is to reduce homelessness statewide and in each county by 70 percent by 2015 and 100 percent by 2018.

Additional Program, Reporting and Evaluation Requirements

Responsibilities of the DCTED:

- update the State Ending Homelessness plan annually;
- create program performance measures in collaboration with a task force;
- evaluate local plans and local performance annually;
- provide technical assistance to local governments to apply to the Washington State Quality Award Program for a quality management assessment; and
- integrate the Homeless Families with Children plan into the State Ending Homelessness plan.

Responsibilities of Local Governments:

- update the Local Ending Homelessness plan annually;
- include and report upon performance measures in Local Ending Homelessness plans; and

- apply for an independent assessment from the Washington State Quality Award Program if the local government receives \$500,000 or more in state housing funding and certain housing surcharge revenue.

Responsibilities of the Interagency Council on Homelessness:

- respond to the legislative recommendations in the state and local plans.

Homeless Grant Assistance Program:

Grants from the Homeless Grant Assistance Program may only be awarded to programs directly related to addressing the root causes of homelessness, preventing homelessness, and collecting data and information on homeless individuals.

Other Bill Components

- **The Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee (JLARC)** will audit the Ending Homelessness program every 4 years beginning in 2009.
- **The Department of Employment Security** shall develop a self-sufficiency standard.
- **Washington Institute for Public Policy** will be contracted by the DCTED to determine the most effective, accurate and comprehensive way for counties and the state to measure and evaluate the societal cost of homelessness.
- **Local governments, the DCTED, the Washington State Housing Finance Commission, Housing Authorities** and other involved non-profit organizations are required to make recommendations regarding how best to streamline homeless housing reporting requirements.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed. However, the bill is null and void unless funded in the budget.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: (Housing)

(In support) This bill is a good enhancement of the Homeless Housing and Assistance Act passed in 2005. Counties are showing progress but there is still much to be done and the additional surcharge fees are critical to enable counties and the state to reach the goal of reducing homelessness by 50 percent by 2015. There is a large gap between the needs identified in the state and local plans and the funding available to address those needs. The current homeless program has been effective in raising awareness of the homeless issue. It is important to maintain the momentum gained so far. Additional funds, which can be used by counties in ways they feel are most appropriate to meet the needs of their homeless populations, will help homeless providers continue to show good progress toward meeting the goal. Ten dollars is not a large amount in comparison to other fees and commissions involved in real estate transactions in today's market. An investment now in the prevention of homelessness will pay off for future generations. The addition of greater accountability for state housing programs is also a critical piece of the bill.

(With concerns) The definition of homeless should be amended to ensure that victims of domestic violence will be counted as part of the homeless population and will be eligible for services. Additional funds should go to actual housing programs, not more planning requirements. The state should look at increasing the administrative funds allowed to be used by a county or city to operate its homeless program.

(Opposed) The document recording fee does not have as close a nexus as everyone seems to think it does. There should be a broader funding source that spreads the cost burden among a larger group of tax payers. The recording fee surcharge should not be tapped again for this purpose.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: (Appropriations Subcommittee on General Government & Audit Review)

(In support) The performance measures in this bill will help to ensure that tax dollars on homelessness are spent wisely and effectively.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: (Housing) (In support) Representative Miloscia, prime sponsor; Daniel Malone, Washington State Coalition for the Homeless; Kathy Wahto, Serenity House Clallam; Debra Nielsen, Mason County Shelter; Sola Plumacher, Office of Housing Homelessness, Snohomish County; Amy Reynolds, Share of Clark County; Bill Block, Committee to End Homelessness in King County; Laura Hitchcock, United Way of King County; Nick Federici, Washington Low Income Housing Alliance; Donald Chamberlain, AIDS Housing of Washington and Washington Families Fund; and Marie Jubie, North Sound Mental Health.

(With concerns) Doug Levy, Cities of Federal Way and Kent and Grace Huang, Washington Coalition Against Domestic Violence.

(Opposed) Jean Wessman, Washington Association of Counties and Suzanne Sinclair, Washington State Association of County Auditors.

Persons Testifying: (Appropriations Subcommittee on General Government & Audit Review) Seth Dawson, Washington State Coalition for the Homeless.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: (Housing) None.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: (Appropriations Subcommittee on General Government & Audit Review) None.