

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2398

As Passed Legislature

Title: An act relating to clarifying current requirements for public purchases of goods and services from nonprofit agencies for the blind.

Brief Description: Clarifying current requirements for public purchases of goods and services from nonprofit agencies for the blind.

Sponsors: Representatives Holy, Riccelli, Appleton, Haler, Stokesbary, Ormsby, Parker, Santos and S. Hunt.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

State Government: 1/21/16, 1/26/16 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 2/16/16, 97-0.

Passed Senate: 3/1/16, 47-0.

Passed Legislature.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Adds references in procurement law to existing purchasing requirements for blind-made goods and services.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 7 members: Representatives S. Hunt, Chair; Bergquist, Vice Chair; Holy, Ranking Minority Member; Van Werven, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Frame, Hawkins and Moscoso.

Staff: Dawn Eychaner (786-7135).

Background:

State agencies as well as counties, cities, and other political subdivisions must purchase goods and services from nonprofit agencies for the blind whenever possible. To qualify, nonprofit agencies for the blind must be located in-state and must manufacture or distribute

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blind-made products. The goods and services must be equal in quality and price to those available from other sources. This requirement is codified in a title dealing with miscellaneous business regulations.

In 2011 state procurement responsibilities were consolidated in the Department of Enterprise Services (DES). The DES adopts policies and procedures for the effective and efficient management of contracts by state agencies and enters into master contracts which may be utilized by state, local, and nonprofit agencies. In general, laws relating to contracting and the purchase of goods and services are codified in a title dealing with public contracts and indebtedness.

Summary of Bill:

References to the law relating to the purchase of blind-made goods and services are added to laws relating to public purchasing and preferences.

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) The requirements in RCW 19.06.020 have long been overlooked. This bill sheds light on this statute. Within the greater disabled population, individuals who are blind face the greatest challenge in finding jobs. More than 11,000 public employees do public purchasing in this state. This is an opportunity to bring this requirement to the list of considerations these public employees must look at when making purchases. This will create job opportunities for people who are blind, who face unemployment or underemployment rates of 70 percent. This is the right thing to do and is a restatement of existing law.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Holy, prime sponsor; Shawn Dobbs, Inland Northwest Lighthouse; and Paula Hoffman, The Lighthouse for the Blind Incorporated.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.