

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## E3SHB 1482

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As Reported by Senate Committee On:  
Human Services & Corrections, February 23, 2018

**Title:** An act relating to establishing the legislative-executive WorkFirst poverty reduction oversight task force.

**Brief Description:** Establishing the legislative-executive WorkFirst poverty reduction oversight task force.

**Sponsors:** House Committee on Early Learning & Human Services (originally sponsored by Representatives Sawyer, Kagi, Stambaugh, Caldier, Robinson, Springer, Hargrove, Tarleton, Ormsby, Doglio and Stanford).

**Brief History:** Passed House: 2/13/18, 69-29.

**Committee Activity:** Human Services & Corrections: 2/20/18, 2/23/18 [DP].

### Brief Summary of Bill

- Replaces the Legislative-Executive WorkFirst Oversight Task Force with the Legislative-Executive WorkFirst Poverty Reduction Oversight Task Force.
- Creates the Intergenerational Poverty Advisory Committee to advise the Task Force.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES & CORRECTIONS

**Majority Report:** Do pass.

Signed by Senators Darneille, Chair; Dhingra, Vice Chair; O'Ban, Ranking Member; Carlyle, Frockt and Miloscia.

**Staff:** Brandon Popovac (786-7465)

**Background:** WorkFirst Program. Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) is a federal block grant that provides temporary cash assistance, subsidized childcare, and work programs for families. The Washington WorkFirst TANF Act of 1997 created the WorkFirst program. With limited exceptions, adult TANF recipients must participate in one or more of the following WorkFirst activities: paid and unpaid employment-based training programs;

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career development; community service; work skills assessment and job hunting training; and vocational training programs. WorkFirst participants may receive additional services such as child support collection, food assistance, and subsidized childcare.

The Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) administers the WorkFirst program in partnership with the Department of Commerce (Commerce), the Department of Early Learning (DEL), the Employment Security Department (ESD), the Office of Financial Management (OFM), and the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC).

Legislative-Executive WorkFirst Oversight Task Force. The Legislative-Executive WorkFirst Oversight Task Force was established in 2011 to oversee a redesign of the WorkFirst program and the operation of the TANF program. The Legislative-Executive WorkFirst Oversight Task Force is composed of eight legislative members and six Governor-appointed agency representatives. The agencies represented are DSHS, Commerce, DEL, ESD, OFM, and SBCTC.

Intergenerational Poverty. Intergenerational poverty refers to two or more consecutive generations of a family experiencing poverty. According to the United States Census Bureau, 12.7 percent of Washington's population is living under the federal poverty level. The 2018 federal poverty guideline for a household of four is a monthly income of \$2,092.

**Summary of Bill:** Legislative-Executive WorkFirst Poverty Reduction Oversight Task Force (Task Force). The Task Force is established and the Legislative-Executive WorkFirst Oversight Task Force is eliminated. The Task Force must:

- oversee the operation of the WorkFirst and TANF programs;
- determine evidence-based outcome measures for the WorkFirst program;
- develop accountability measures for WorkFirst recipients and agencies responsible for recipient progress toward self-sufficiency;
- collaborate with the Intergenerational Poverty Advisory Committee (Committee) to develop and monitor strategies to prevent and address adverse childhood experiences and reduce intergenerational poverty;
- seek input on best practices for poverty reduction from service providers, community-based organizations, legislators, state agencies, stakeholders, the business community, and subject matter experts;
- collaborate with partner agencies and the Committee to analyze available data and information regarding intergenerational poverty; and
- recommend policy actions to the Governor and the Legislature to effectively reduce intergenerational poverty and promote and encourage self-sufficiency.

Staff support for the Task Force must be provided by the state agency members. Additional staff support for the legislative members of the Task Force must be provided by Senate Committee Services and the Office of Program Research.

The Task Force membership must include diverse, statewide representation reflecting regional, racial, and cultural diversity. Voting members include four members of the Senate, four members of the House of Representatives, and eight members representing DSHS, the Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF), Commerce, ESD, the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, the Department of Health, the Department of

Corrections, and SBCTC. The Task Force must choose one legislative member and one executive branch member to serve as co-chairs.

The Governor must appoint five nonvoting members to the Task Force representing the Commission on African-American Affairs, the Commission on Hispanic Affairs, the Commission on Asian Pacific American Affairs, the Governor's Office of Indian Affairs, and OFM.

Intergenerational Poverty Advisory Committee. The Committee is created to advise the Task Force. The Committee must meet at the request of the Task Force, make recommendations on how to effectively address the needs of children affected by intergenerational poverty and to achieve Task Force purposes, support recommendations with verifiable data, and gather input from diverse communities of intergenerational poverty on certain outcomes.

Committee membership must also include diverse, statewide representation reflecting regional, racial, and cultural diversity, with members to be appointed by the secretary of DSHS and staff support provided by DSHS. Specifically, Committee members must include: representatives of advocacy groups; academic experts in childhood poverty, education, or early childhood education; faith-based organizations; tribal governments; families impacted by poverty; local government representatives; the business community; an infant mental health expert; DCYF; and DSHS. The Committee must choose co-chairs from among its membership. The co-chairs of the Committee must also serve as nonvoting members of the Task Force.

Reporting and Planning. The executive branch agencies represented on the Task Force must provide the Task Force with regular reports on progress toward meeting the outcome and performance measures established by the Task Force, caseload trends and program expenditures and their impact on client services, and characteristics of families who have been unsuccessful on TANF and have lost their benefits.

DSHS must, as directed by the Task Force, develop a five-year plan to address intergenerational poverty and promote self-sufficiency and, upon approval by the Task Force, must submit the plan to the Governor and the Legislature by December 1, 2019. The Task Force must review the five-year plan by December 1, 2024, and direct DSHS to update the plan as necessary.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members:** Yes.

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

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:** PRO: New approaches and strategies are needed to address poverty and keep people out of poverty. The genesis of this bill derives from an analysis of efforts in other states to address intergenerational poverty. The TANF program fit an ideal profile since it contains an intergenerational focus. This bill will not reinvent the

wheel in terms of who is involved with the task force, but will inject new stakeholder perspectives to showcase how poverty affects individuals in urban, rural, and suburban communities. The task force would determine evidence-based outcomes and fulfills the governor's directive to establish this task force. Although a target to reduce poverty was included in a previous version of the bill, the task force could develop its own targets if necessary. The implementation of a five-year plan will allow the necessary review and updates to move forward.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Laurie Lippold, Partners for Our Children; Alex Hur, Statewide Poverty Action Network.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:** No one.