

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SB 5929

As Passed House - Amended:

March 3, 2022

Title: An act relating to changing the membership of the legislative-executive WorkFirst poverty reduction oversight task force.

Brief Description: Changing the membership of the legislative-executive WorkFirst poverty reduction oversight task force.

Sponsors: Senators Wilson, C. and Nguyen; by request of Department of Social and Health Services.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Housing, Human Services & Veterans: 2/18/22, 2/22/22 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 3/3/22, 67-31.

Brief Summary of Bill (As Amended by House)

- Expands the membership of the Legislative-Executive WorkFirst Poverty Oversight Task Force to include a representative from the Women's Commission, a representative from the LGBTQ Commission, and a representative from the Office of Equity.
- Adds a member of a group representing accredited financial counselors to the Intergenerational Poverty Advisory Committee.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HOUSING, HUMAN SERVICES & VETERANS

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 6 members: Representatives Peterson, Chair; Taylor, Vice Chair; Bateman, Chopp, Donaghy and Leavitt.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Minority Report: Without recommendation. Signed by 3 members: Representatives Gilday, Ranking Minority Member; Barkis, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Jacobsen.

Staff: Serena Dolly (786-7150).

Background:

Legislative-Executive WorkFirst Poverty Reduction Oversight Task Force.

The Legislative-Executive WorkFirst Poverty Reduction Oversight Task Force (LEWPRO) was established in 2018. The voting membership of the LEWPRO is comprised of eight state agency representatives and eight members of the Legislature. The state agencies represented on the LEWPRO are the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS); the Department of Commerce; the Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF); the Employment Security Department; the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction; the Department of Health; the Department of Corrections; and the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges. The Governor appoints five nonvoting members to the LEWPRO 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 the Office of Financial Management. The co-chairs of the Intergenerational Poverty Advisory Committee serve as two additional nonvoting members.

The LEWPRO is tasked with:

- overseeing the operation of the WorkFirst and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families programs;
- determining evidence-based outcome measures for the WorkFirst program;
- developing accountability measures for WorkFirst recipients and agencies responsible for recipient progress toward self-sufficiency;
- collaborating with the Intergenerational Poverty Advisory Committee to develop and monitoring strategies to prevent and address adverse childhood experiences and reduce intergenerational poverty;
- seeking input on best practices for poverty reduction from service providers, community-based organizations, legislators, state agencies, stakeholders, the business community, and subject matter experts;
- collaborating with partner agencies and the Intergenerational Poverty Advisory Committee to analyze available data and information regarding intergenerational poverty; and
- recommending policy actions to the Governor and the Legislature to effectively reduce intergenerational poverty and promote and encourage self-sufficiency.

In 2019, the LEWPRO published its Five-Year Plan to Reduce Intergenerational Poverty and Promote Self-Sufficiency.

Intergenerational Poverty Advisory Committee.

The Intergenerational Poverty Advisory Committee (Committee) assists the LEWPRO.

Committee members are appointed by the Secretary of the DSHS, and staff support is provided by the DSHS. The Committee must choose co-chairs from among its membership. 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; the business community; a subject matter expert in infant mental health; the DCYF; and the DSHS.

The Women's Commission.

The Women's Commission was created in 2018 with a mission of improving the life of every woman by ensuring equitable opportunities and removing systemic barriers through engagement, advocacy, and public policy, while being inclusive of diverse populations. The Women's Commission is comprised of four nonvoting legislators and nine voting members approved by the Governor.

The LGBTQ Commission.

The LGBTQ Commission was established in 2019 with a mission to improve the interface with the LGBTQ community, identify the needs of its members, and ensure there is an effective means of advocating for LGBTQ equity in all aspects of state government. The LGBTQ Commission is comprised of four nonvoting legislative members and 15 voting members appointed by the Governor.

The Office of Equity.

The Office of Equity was created in 2021 to promote access to equitable opportunities and resources that reduce disparities and improve outcomes across state government.

Summary of Amended Bill:

The LEWPRO's membership is expanded to include a representative from the Women's Commission, a representative from the LGBTQ Commission, and a representative from the Office of Equity. These nonvoting positions are appointed by the Governor.

The Committee is expanded by one member from a group representing accredited financial counselors.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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) Poverty affects diverse communities across the state, and lived experience voices are important in developing solutions and strategies. Since LEWPRO was established, the Legislature has created the Women's Commission, the LGBTQ Commission, and the Office of Equity, and LEWPRO has asked to have members from these entities added. These voices will help ensure equity, reduce poverty, and make LEWPRO more inclusive.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Senator Claire Wilson, prime sponsor; and Babs Roberts, Department of Social and Health Services, Economic Services Administration.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.