

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2152

*As Reported By House Committee on:
Housing*

Title: An act relating to a study on having direct payments to landlords from public assistance.

Brief Description: Appointing a direct landlord pay task force.

Sponsor(s): Representatives Leonard, Mitchell, Nelson, Franklin, Ogden, Ballard, Winsley, Chandler, D. Sommers, Forner, Moyer, Morton and Hochstatter.

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
Housing, March 5, 1991, DPS.

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
HOUSING**

Majority Report: *That Substitute House Bill No. 2152 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.*

Signed by 8 members: Representatives Nelson, Chair; Franklin, Vice Chair; Mitchell, Ranking Minority Member; Winsley, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Ballard; Leonard; Ogden; and Wineberry.

Staff: Kenny Pittman (786-7392).

Background: Lower-income households are faced with a variety of problems in obtaining adequate housing. The problems range from a lack of affordable housing to the household's inability to access housing due to the source of their income.

In 1988, the Legislature directed the Department of Social and Health Services to develop a direct landlord pay pilot program. The purpose of the pilot program was to see if the availability of housing for households on public assistance would improve if a portion of the public assistance payment was made to the landlord for rent. The program was offered on a voluntary basis to recipients on public assistance.

The Department of Social and Health Services was authorized to contract with up to seven local communities to implement the local pilot program sites. To date, only the city of

Walla Walla and Spokane County have applied to participate in the pilot program.

Summary of Substitute Bill: An 11-member Direct Landlord Pay Task Force is appointed by the Department of Social and Health Services to conduct a study to determine if the supply of housing for persons on public assistance would increase if rental payments were made directly to the landlord.

The membership of the Direct Landlord Pay Task Force (Task Force) consists of: (a) Two members of the House of Representatives, one from each political party; (b) Two members of the Senate, one from each party; (c) Two members that represent apartment owners; (d) Two members that represent low-income tenants; (e) One member that represents public housing authorities; (f) The director of the Department of Community Development, or the director's designee; and (g) The secretary of the Department of Social and Health Services, or the secretary's designee, who serves as chair. The chair is a nonvoting member of the Task Force, except in the case of ties. The Department of Social and Health Services provides staffing for the Task Force.

In conducting the study, the Direct Landlord Pay Task Force must: (a) review the results of the direct landlord pay pilot program; (b) examine the housing needs of persons on public assistance; and (c) make recommendations on program development and administrative options for a direct landlord pay program.

The Direct Landlord Pay Task Force must provide a written report with recommendations to the House of Representatives' Committee on Housing and Human Services and the Senate Children and Family Services Committee by December 1, 1991.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The substitute bill adds four legislators to the Direct Landlord Pay Task Force. The director of the Department of Community Development and the secretary of the Department of Social and Health Services are allowed to appoint a designee to the Direct Landlord Pay Task Force.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect July 1, 1991.

Testimony For: The original 1988 pilot program did not work for a variety of reasons. The task force can be used to create a partnership between apartment owners, tenants, and the state in developing a program that can work. The bill

should be revised to include members from the Legislature on the task force.

Testimony Against: None.

Witnesses: Arnold Fox, Washington Apartment Association (in favor of the bill); Patricia Richards, Department of Social and Health Services (in favor of the bill); and Rick Slunaker, Yakima Valley Rental Association.