

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1167

*As Reported By House Committee on:
Human Services*

Title: An act relating to hunger and malnutrition.

Brief Description: Addressing hunger and nutritional problems.

Sponsor(s): Representatives Wineberry, Moyer, Leonard, Prince, Inslee, Winsley, Franklin, D. Sommers, Locke, Appelwick, Ebersole, Brekke, Sprenkle, Wang, Anderson, Phillips, Jones, Prentice, Basich, Nelson, Vance, Ogden, Wood, Dellwo, R. Johnson, Cole, Belcher, Spanel, Scott, Hine, Valle and Zellinsky.

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
Human Services, February 6, 1991, DPS.

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
HUMAN SERVICES**

Majority Report: *That Substitute House Bill No. 1167 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.* Signed by 9 members: Representatives Leonard, Chair; Riley, Vice Chair; Winsley, Ranking Minority Member; Tate, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Anderson; Beck; Hargrove; R. King; and H. Myers.

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

Staff: David Knutson (786-7146).

Background: Hunger and malnutrition are problems facing large segments of Washington state's population. A recent report by the Governor's Task Force on Hunger found that 547,000 citizens in our State are living below the poverty level. A large percentage of low-income families experience at least one food shortage problem due to inadequate resources. Between 20 and 40 percent of these families experience severe monthly food shortages, directly affecting children. People facing severe hunger often have to wait several days before their application for food stamp assistance is approved by the Department of Social and Health Services.

This can cause a severe problem for hungry families, children and adults. Adequate nutrition is critical for pregnant and lactating women, to ensure healthy outcomes for babies and infants. Other people who rely on food banks also have special nutritional needs which cannot be met currently.

The existing network of emergency food assistance programs is unable to meet the demand for the purchase, transportation and storage of food.

The United States Department of Agriculture authorizes several food programs, including, the School Breakfast and Lunch Programs, the Summer Feeding Program and Child and Adult Day Care Feeding Programs to meet the nutritional needs of eligible persons. Many communities in our State do not participate in these programs, resulting in hunger, malnutrition and inadequate nutrition education for persons who meet federal eligibility requirements.

Federal law allows states to exempt child support as income in determining food stamp need and eligibility. This will allow additional food stamps to be issued to eligible persons. If a state chooses to exempt child support as income, the state is financially responsible for the increased amount of the food stamps.

Summary of Substitute B Bill: The number of eligible women and children served by the Special Supplemental Food Program for women, infants and children is increased. The Emergency Food Assistance Program is expanded to provide additional support for the purchase, transportation and storage of food, and support food bank operations, food distribution programs and tribal voucher programs. Food for persons with special nutritional needs and training for food bank staff in these special nutritional needs is increased. The Department of Social and Health Services is directed to issue food stamps to eligible applicants within twenty-four hours of application. The Superintendent of Public Instruction is required to solicit and provide financial support for eligible schools to participate in nutrition programs authorized by the United States Department of Agriculture.

The Department of Social and Health Services is required to exclude child support as income in determining the need and eligibility for food stamps.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: An additional \$1,000,000 is provided for food bank operation in timber dependent communities. An appropriation of \$1,700,000 is provided to allow exemption of child support when

determining food stamp eligibility. An internal reference is corrected.

Fiscal Note: Requested January 14, 1991.

Appropriation: Yes.

Effective Date: July 1, 1991.

Testimony For: Hunger is a pervasive problem in Washington state. There are several programs in place to address hunger and malnutrition, but they are being overwhelmed by the demand for food. Food banks throughout the State are experiencing increasing requests for food. The Women, Infant, Child Nutrition Program can only serve 40 percent of the eligible population. People requesting food stamps through the Department of Social and Health Services often wait days and weeks before they receive assistance. The department should issue expedited food stamps in emergency situations. School nutrition programs provide low income children with nutritious food. Many school districts do not provide nutrition programs for low income children. Additional assistance is needed to expand school nutrition programs.

Testimony Against: None.

Witnesses: Steve Lansing, Lutheran Public Policy Office; Margaret Casey, Catholic Conference and Children's Alliance; Kay Osborne, Food and Nutrition Council; Mary Selecky, Northeast Tri-County and the Health Department; Jim Valaile, Fremont Public Association; Carol Felton, Department of Social and Health Services; Jeff McElhinney, Rural Resources Development Association; Terry Moore, Spokane Food Bank; Charmaine Slye, Chicken Soup Brigade; Richard Skinner, School Food Service Association; Sue Hutchins, Association of Local WIC Agencies; Mary Jane Danielson, Seattle-King County Health Department; and Heather Inoway, WIC Participant.