

HOUSE BILL REPORT

2SSB 5568

*As Passed House
April 12, 1991*

Title: An act relating to hunger and nutrition.

Brief Description: Addressing hunger and nutritional problems.

Sponsor(s): Senate Committee on Ways & Means (originally sponsored by Senators Roach, Stratton, Talmadge, L. Smith, Pelz, Bailey, Gaspard, Vognild, Williams, Skratek, Murray, Newhouse, McMullen, Matson, Bauer, West, L. Kreidler, A. Smith, Wojahn, Moore, Rinehart and Snyder).

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
Human Services, April 3, 1991, DP;
Appropriations, April 8, 1991, DPA;
Passed House, April 12, 1991, 91-0.

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
HUMAN SERVICES**

Majority Report: *Do pass.* Signed by 10 members: Representatives Leonard, Chair; Riley, Vice Chair; Winsley, Ranking Minority Member; Tate, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Anderson; Beck; Brekke; Hargrove; Hochstatter; and H. Myers.

Staff: David Knutson (786-7146).

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
APPROPRIATIONS**

Majority Report: *Do pass as amended.* Signed by 28 members: Representatives Locke, Chair; Inslee, Vice Chair; Spanel, Ranking Minority Member; Silver, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Morton; Appelwick; Belcher; Bowman; Braddock; Brekke; Dorn; Ebersole; Ferguson; Fuhrman; Hine; Holland; Lisk; May; McLean; Mielke; Nealey; Peery; Rust; H. Sommers; Valle; Vance; Wang; and Wineberry.

Staff: David Knutson (786-7146) and Maureen Morris (786-7152).

Background: Hunger and malnutrition are problems facing large segments of Washington states' population. A recent report by the Governors' Task Force on Hunger found that 547,000 citizens in our state are living below the poverty level. Between 20 and 40 percent of low-income families currently 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 currently be met.

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

Summary of 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 to support food bank operations, food distribution programs, and tribal voucher programs. Food for persons with special nutritional needs is provided. Food bank staff will receive training on these special nutritional needs. The Department of Social and Health Services is directed to issue food stamps to eligible applicants within 24 hours of application.

If the legislation is not specifically referenced in the biennial operating budget, it is null and void.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect July 1, 1991. However, if the legislation is not specifically referenced in the biennial operating budget, it is null and void.

Testimony For: (Human Services) There are hungry children and adults in Washington state right now. The Legislature should address this problem in statute and appropriate sufficient funds to solve this problem.

(Appropriations) Hunger and malnutrition among children and other groups is a serious problem in Washington. The Legislature needs to acknowledge the extent of this problem and appropriate funds to address it.

Testimony Against: (Human Services) None.

(Appropriations) None.

Witnesses: (Human Services) Margaret Casey, Children's Budget Coalition (pro).

(Appropriations) Margaret Casey, Children's Budget Coalition (pro).