

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1969

As Reported By House Committee On:
Trade, Economic Development & Housing

Title: An act relating to the Washington serves program.

Brief Description: Creating the "Washington serves" voluntary service program.

Sponsors: Representatives Wang, Locke, Silver, Wineberry, Sommers, Forner, Kremen, Jones, Springer, Patterson, Ogden and J. Kohl.

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
Trade, Economic Development & Housing, March 1, 1993,
DPS.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TRADE, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & HOUSING

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 10 members: Representatives Wineberry, Chair; Shin, Vice Chair; Forner, Ranking Minority Member; Chandler, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Campbell; Morris; Sheldon; Springer; Valle; and Wood.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 2 members: Representatives Conway and Schoesler.

Staff: Kenny Pittman (786-7392).

Background: The Washington Service Corps Program was created by the Legislature in 1983. The purpose of the program is to provide service opportunities and meaningful work experience to young adults between the ages of 18 and 25. The Department of Employment Security (DES) is responsible for the administration of the program.

Proponents feel that budget constraints on communities and nonprofit organizations have led to a reduction of services at a time of increased demand. Many of these organizations could use volunteers on a full-time basis. They feel that what is needed is a program that allows people over the age of 25 to work as volunteers on a full-time basis in communities and nonprofit organizations. This would allow

the organization to continue to deliver the service while giving the volunteer a meaningful work experience.

Summary of Substitute Bill: The Washington Serves Program is created in DES. The purpose of the program is to provide full-time community service opportunities to people over the age of 21. The program must be coordinated with all other federal or state funded volunteer service programs to maximize benefits to the volunteers and the community.

DES may recruit, train, place, and evaluate applicants wanting to participate in the program. DES is authorized to enter into agreements or contracts with governmental or private nonprofit organizations wanting a placement of a volunteer.

Applicants to the Washington Serves Program must be at least 21 years of age and a Washington resident; agree to serve for a period of one year, but may serve for a period of less than one year if approved by DES; and committed to providing full-time service to the community. Volunteers may reapply to serve for an additional period not to exceed two years.

Program applicants may be placed with any public or private nonprofit organization, program, or project that qualifies under the program. The applicants must work on projects that benefit the community or state at large. Eligible projects include those that address jobless or homeless persons, provide support to persons in need of job training or retraining, address health care problems of low-income persons, address alcohol and drug abuse problems, or seek to enhance or improve the environment.

Volunteers are provided the following benefits for participation in the program: (1) monthly subsistence allowance as determined by DES, taking into consideration amounts paid in other federal or state volunteer programs; (2) post service stipend, upon completion of service, that is based on the number of months of service; and (3) state medical aid coverage.

Volunteers can not be used to displace or partially displace existing workers and those placed in participating agencies are not eligible for unemployment compensation coverage.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The substitute bill removes the \$462,000 general fund appropriation and replaces it with a null and void clause.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Appropriation: Removed.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed. However, the bill is null and void if not funded in the budget.

Testimony For: This program would provide adults, over the age of 25, the opportunity for full-time community service. There are many organizations that could use volunteers on communitywide projects. The organizations would gain from having a full-time volunteer, while the volunteer would gain valuable working experience.

Testimony Against: None.

Witnesses: Representative Wang, prime sponsor (pro); and Bill Basl, Department of Employment Security (pro).