

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## HB 2160

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As Passed Legislature

**Title:** An act relating to background checks on employees of public housing authorities.

**Brief Description:** Concerning employees of public housing authorities.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Ogden, Wineberry and H. Myers.

**Brief History:**

Reported by House Committee on:

Trade, Economic Development & Housing, January 24, 1994,  
DP;

Passed House, February 14, 1994, 92-0;

Passed Legislature.

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### HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TRADE, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & HOUSING

**Majority Report:** Do pass. Signed by 11 members: Representatives Wineberry, Chair; Shin, Vice Chair; Schoesler, Ranking Minority Member; Backlund; Campbell; Conway; Quall; Sheldon; Springer; Valle; and Wood.

**Minority Report:** Without recommendation. Signed by 3 members: Representatives Chandler, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Casada; and Morris.

**Staff:** Kenny Pittman (786-7392).

**Background:** Under current law, the Washington State Patrol is authorized to disclose, at the request of a school district, business organization, or state agency which educates, treats, supervises or provides recreation to children or developmentally disabled persons: (1) an applicant's record of convictions of certain offenses against persons; (2) civil findings of child abuse or exploitation in dependency or dissolution proceedings when the perpetrator contested the allegation of abuse; and (3) disciplinary board final decisions. An applicant is defined as any prospective employee or volunteer who has unsupervised access to children, developmentally disabled persons or non-certified educational personnel.

Local public housing authorities, through various federal, state, and local programs, provide safe and sanitary housing

for many lower-income persons and populations with special needs. These populations consist of a large number of developmentally disabled persons, elderly persons, and children who are considered vulnerable to abuse or exploitation.

The current definition of "business or organization" does not include public housing authorities as a governmental entity authorized to request background information on prospective employees or volunteers. Many states will not provide background information to public housing authorities unless they are specifically authorized, in state law, to request such information.

**Summary of Bill:** The definition of "business or organization" is amended to expressly include public housing authorities as entities that can request background checks on prospective employees or volunteers who will or may have unsupervised access to children under the age of sixteen, developmentally disabled persons or vulnerable adults.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

**Effective Date:** Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

**Testimony For:** This is a prevention bill. Public housing authorities provide housing for all groups, including children and vulnerable adults. There should be a background check on employees or volunteers who have contact with these groups. While there has been no recorded incident, this bill will provide an additional preventive measure for public housing authorities.

**Testimony Against:** None.

**Witnesses:** Representative Val Ogden, Prime Sponsor (pro); Mike Ryherd, Low-Income Housing Congress (pro); Kurt Creager, Vancouver Housing Authority (pro); and Mike Sivia, Seattle Housing Authority (pro).