

HOUSE BILL REPORT

ESHB 1672

As Passed House
March 17, 1993

Title: An act relating to public health.

Brief Description: Creating the eye care for the homeless program in Washington.

Sponsors: By House Committee on Human Services (originally sponsored by Representatives Wineberry, J. Kohl, Wood, Anderson, Sheldon, Voloria, Scott, Jones, Ludwig, Brough and Foreman.)

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
Human Services, March 3, 1993, DPS;
Passed House, March 17, 1993, 97-0.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 10 members: Representatives Riley, Vice Chair; Cooke, Ranking Minority Member; Talcott, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Brown; Karahalios; Lisk; Padden; Patterson; Thibaudeau; and Wolfe.

Staff: Jim Erlandson (786-7093).

Background: Among the numerous barriers that many homeless people have to achieving self-sufficiency is impaired vision. Currently, many providers of vision services offer services at reduced cost or no cost to individuals who are homeless. There is currently no formalized coordination in connecting the homeless who are in need of vision services with providers of those services.

Summary of Bill: This bill creates the Eye Care For The Homeless Program. It requires the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) to provide coordination of the efforts of those non-profit organizations who work with the homeless and the providers of vision services, the Washington Academy of Eye Physicians and the Opticians Association of Washington. The coordinated efforts shall be directed to the provision of vision services to the homeless free of charge.

Section 3 of the bill requires DSHS to pay for the eyeglass hardware to the extent it is consistent with the department's budget. It also requires the department to seek private sector funding for this program.

The bill allows the use of used frames for the program and absolves providers from civil and administrative liability except in cases of malicious conduct.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: Statutory standards and criteria for the coordination and delivery of services to the deaf and hard of hearing are needed.

Testimony Against: By providing vision services and eye wear for the homeless, the state would be encouraging those homeless individuals to not become self sufficient.

Witnesses: (in favor) Carla Grau-Egerton and Ron Wagner, Washington Academy of Eye Physicians; and Dr. Jeff Graham, Department of Social and Health Services; and (con) Sonnia Bean.