
HOUSE BILL 3152

State of Washington

58th Legislature

2004 Regular Session

By Representatives O'Brien, McDonald, Cody, Morrell, Flannigan, Wallace, Simpson, D., Wood, Chase, Santos and Edwards

Read first time 01/30/2004. Referred to Committee on Children & Family Services.

1 AN ACT Relating to housing for homeless veterans; adding a new
2 section to chapter 71.24 RCW; and creating a new section.

3 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** It is estimated that veterans constitute
5 nearly thirty percent of Washington's homeless adult population.
6 According to the United States department of veterans affairs, veterans
7 are twice as likely as nonveterans to become homeless. Women veterans
8 are four times as likely as nonveteran women to become homeless.
9 Homeless veterans experience multiple barriers to employment, including
10 long-term homelessness, unemployment, higher rates of hepatitis C,
11 physical and mental disability, posttraumatic stress disorder, and
12 substance abuse issues. When veterans who are seriously mentally ill
13 are homeless and do not have access to stable, affordable housing and
14 the services they need, they frequently enter the criminal justice
15 system or use costly emergency services, including emergency rooms,
16 hospitals, mental health treatment facilities, shelters, and other
17 services for crises that could have been avoided.

1 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 71.24 RCW
2 to read as follows:

3 (1) It is the policy of this state and the purpose of this section
4 to facilitate and support the development and operation of housing for
5 homeless mentally ill veterans who possess significant barriers to
6 their social reintegration due to mental illness, and the effects of
7 long-term homelessness that render them unable to share housing with
8 the general homeless population.

9 (2) The provision of housing exclusively for mentally ill veterans
10 who possess significant barriers to social reintegration and employment
11 is hereby authorized and shall not be considered unlawful
12 discrimination, notwithstanding any other provision of law.

13 (3) For the purposes of this section, "housing for mentally ill
14 veterans," means emergency, transitional, or permanent housing tied to
15 supportive services that assist mentally ill veterans who possess
16 significant barriers to social reintegration and employment in
17 stabilizing their lives and developing the skills and resources they
18 need to make successful transitions to independent, self-sufficient
19 lives.

20 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** (1) The mental health division of the
21 department of social and health services shall establish a pilot
22 program to provide housing for fifty mentally ill, homeless veterans.
23 The pilot program shall be financed through the capturing of moneys
24 that otherwise would be spent on criminal justice, hospital emergency
25 room, and other sources to serve mentally ill, homeless veterans.

26 (2) The department of social and health services may adopt rules to
27 implement this section.

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