

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## SSB 5767

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**As Reported by House Committee On:**  
Housing

**Title:** An act relating to developing plans to address the housing needs of homeless persons.

**Brief Description:** Developing plans to address the housing needs of homeless persons.

**Sponsors:** Senate Committee on Financial Institutions, Housing & Consumer Protection (originally sponsored by Senators McAuliffe, Haugen, Keiser, Kline, Kohl-Welles, Fairley, Franklin, Shin, Berkey and Hargrove).

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:**

Housing: 3/22/05, 3/24/05 [DP].

**Brief Summary of Substitute Bill**

- Requires each county to create a task force to develop a 10-year plan to address short- and long-term housing for homeless persons and to develop guidelines for homeless housing programs and developments.
- Counties must report to the appropriate committees of the Legislature by January 2006. Reports will include information on any guidelines developed, potential partnerships to address homelessness, and requests for further involvement or support from the Legislature.

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### HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HOUSING

**Majority Report:** Do pass. Signed by 5 members: Representatives Miloscia, Chair; Springer, Vice Chair; Ormsby, Pettigrew and Sells.

**Minority Report:** Do not pass. Signed by 4 members: Representatives Holmquist, Ranking Minority Member; Dunn, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; McCune and Schindler.

**Staff:** Robyn Dupuis (786-7166).

**Background:**

There exists a variety of local efforts addressing issues related to homelessness, however there currently exists no formal coordination at the state level, nor are there any formal state requirements of cities and counties related to their efforts to address homelessness within their

boundaries. Current state law does not require local governments to develop a plan for ending homelessness.

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**Summary of Bill:**

All counties must create a task force to develop a 10-year plan addressing short- and long-term housing for the homeless. Each city, code city and town within a county must participate on the county's task force. In addition to representatives from other local governments, each task force must be comprised, among others, of representatives of community businesses and residents, social and health care services, law enforcement, schools, civic and faith organizations, and housing authorities, as well as a homeless or former homeless individual. Counties that already have an existing group focused on homelessness that substantially conforms to the composition requirements of the taskforce, as well as those that are participating in the Washington Balance of State Continuum of Care under the McKinney-Vento Homelessness Assistance Act through the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development, are not required to create a new task force.

In addition to the development of a 10-year plan to end homelessness, the task force is charged with the establishment of guidelines, including standards for health and safety, as well as for public notification of proposed facilities, for shelters, encampments, long-term housing and other housing programs and developments for the homeless population.

Each county must submit a report to the Legislature and the Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development by January 2006 on guidelines developed for homeless housing developments and programs, any potential for public-private partnerships to address homelessness, and requests for further legislative support. Counties participating in the Washington Balance of State Continuum of Care may submit a single report including information on all participating counties. After the initial 2006 report, any additional substantive changes must be reported to the Legislature on a continual basis.

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**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Effective Date:** The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

**Testimony For:** This bill sets the all important goal of ending homelessness, and just as importantly, it asserts that this is an achievable goal. Homelessness is a serious social problem. There were 51,000 people sheltered in Washington (possible duplicated count) and 168,000 incidents of people being turned away from shelters last year. These numbers only take into account state-supported shelters, not the many churches and other private providers that offer shelter to the homeless, nor do the numbers take into account the many people living outdoors because they have given up on the shelter system. Bringing people together to form

task forces is a critical step to addressing our homeless problem. There is no fiscal impact of this bill, therefore it is not an unfunded mandate.

**Testimony Against:** None.

**Persons Testifying:** Ruth Shearer, Bread & Roses Homeless Services; and Seth Dawson, Washington State Coalition for the Homeless.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:** None.