

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5767

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Financial Institutions, Housing & Consumer Protection, February 23, 2005
Ways & Means, March 7, 2005

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: Senators McAuliffe, Haugen, Keiser, Kline, Kohl-Welles, Fairley, Franklin, Shin, Berkey and Hargrove.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Financial Institutions, Housing & Consumer Protection: 2/16/05, 2/23/05[DPS-WM, DNP].
Ways & Means: 3/7/05 [w/oRec, DNP, w/oRec].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS, HOUSING & CONSUMER PROTECTION

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5767 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators Fairley, Chair; Berkey, Vice Chair; Franklin, Keiser, Prentice and Spanel.

Minority Report: Do not pass.

Signed by Senators Benton, Ranking Minority Member; Benson, Brandland, Delvin and Schmidt.

Staff: Jennifer Arnold (786-7471)

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Majority Report: That it be referred without recommendation.

Signed by Senators Prentice, Chair; Doumit, Vice Chair; Fraser, Vice Chair; Brandland, Fairley, Kohl-Welles, Pridemore, Rasmussen, Regala and Rockefeller.

Minority Report: Do not pass.

Signed by Senators Zarelli, Ranking Minority Member; Hewitt.

Minority Report: That it be referred without recommendation.

Signed by Senators Parlette, Pflug, Roach and Schoesler.

Staff: Kirstan Arestad (786-7708)

Background: It is believed that there is a need for solutions to homelessness at a local level. Current law does not require local governments to develop a plan for ending homelessness within their own boundaries. Further, there are concerns that lack of, or insufficient, notice relating to the siting of homeless facilities and temporary encampments places an unfair burden on the homeless persons planning to relocate to that area and the current members of that community.

Summary of Bill: All counties must create a task force to develop a ten-year plan, addressing short and long term housing solutions for the homeless. Each task force must be comprised, among others, of representatives of the local government, 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. Every city and town is required to participate in their respective county's task force.

As needed, each task force must establish guidelines, in addition to the plan to end homelessness, for emergency shelters, temporary encampments, and supportive housing. The guidelines must include provisions for public notice of proposed homeless facilities, as well as health and safety standards for such facilities.

Counties that already have a task force on homelessness, as well as those that are participating in certain federal Housing and Urban Development plans on homelessness, are not required to create a new task force.

Each county must submit a report to the legislature and the Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development by January 2006 on the guidelines developed, any potential for public-private partnerships to address homelessness, and requests, as needed, for further legislative support. After the initial 2006 report, any additional substantive changes must be reported on a continual basis.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: An additional requirement is created, providing that a homeless, or former homeless, person must be on the task force. Counties are not required to create completely new task forces when they already have a body to address homelessness or are following certain federal guidelines. A report must be submitted to CTED, in addition to the legislature.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Testimony For: It is time for us, as a state, to be a partner with businesses, churches, and the community, as a whole, to help counties develop a plan to end homelessness. This will also require the counties to develop solutions for short-term housing, such as homeless encampments. The fiscal impact could be reduced by building onto plans already in existence. This bill should also require certain state agencies to participate in the planning.

Testimony Against: None.

Who Testified: PRO: Senator McAuliffe, prime sponsor; Corine Knudsen, Washington State Coalition for the Homeless; Seth Dawson, Washington State Coalition for the Homeless.