
HOUSE JOINT MEMORIAL 4013

State of Washington 59th Legislature 2005 Regular Session

By Representatives Miloscia, Springer, Sells, Pettigrew, Upthegrove, Simpson, Chase, Hasegawa, Kagi and Santos

Read first time 02/08/2005. Referred to Committee on Housing.

1 TO THE HONORABLE CHRISTINE GREGOIRE, GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF
2 WASHINGTON, AND TO THE LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY OF EACH COUNTY, AND TO
3 EACH MEMBER OF CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

4 We, your Memorialists, the Senate and House of Representatives of
5 the State of Washington, in legislative session assembled, respectfully
6 represent and petition as follows:

7 WHEREAS, Responding to a crisis of truly horrific proportions, many
8 public health agencies and community-based organizations have worked
9 together to stop the rising incidents of death among the members of the
10 homeless population; and

11 WHEREAS, Public Health - Seattle and King County's Health Care for
12 the Homeless Network; the Epidemiology, Planning and Evaluation Section
13 of Public Health - Seattle and King County; the King County Medical
14 Examiner's Office; the King County Council; and many other citizens and
15 organizations have dedicated themselves to developing preliminary
16 information on the number, causes, and characteristics of deaths among
17 the homeless men, women, and children of King County; and

18 WHEREAS, The study found that homeless individuals in King County
19 died at an average age of 47 years old, while the average age of death
20 for the general population in the United States is 77 years old; and

1 WHEREAS, According to this exhaustive King County study, the most
2 frequent causes of death for homeless adults were acute intoxication,
3 cardiovascular disease, and homicide; and

4 WHEREAS, A disproportionately high incidence of tuberculosis,
5 cancer, neurologic, renal, and skin conditions was also reported in
6 this landmark study; and

7 WHEREAS, The work of these selfless, community-minded organizations
8 also found that malnutrition, poor sanitation, overcrowding in poorly
9 ventilated buildings, predatory crime and violence, repeated exposure
10 to the extremes of weather and temperature, and inadequate access to
11 primary and preventive health care services are some of the many risks
12 faced by homeless individuals and families struggling to survive
13 outdoors and in temporary shelters; and

14 WHEREAS, Children and families, according to national studies, make
15 up the fastest-growing segment of the homeless population; and

16 WHEREAS, A child born into homelessness is likely to have a low
17 birth weight, and is nine times as likely to die within his or her
18 first twelve months of life; and

19 WHEREAS, Homeless children experience increased hospitalization
20 rates, more outpatient visits, and more use of the emergency department
21 compared with other low-income children; and

22 WHEREAS, Almost half of all homeless children have two or more
23 developmental delays, one-third of these children have at least one
24 major mental disorder, and almost half of these children have problems
25 with anxiety, withdrawal, or depression; and

26 WHEREAS, Based on the numbers of identified homeless deaths from
27 the King County study as well as the numbers of persons seeking
28 emergency shelter throughout the state, it has been concluded that over
29 200 adults and children die homeless in Washington each year; and

30 WHEREAS, This homeless epidemic should be publicly recognized and
31 addressed;

32 NOW, THEREFORE, Your Memorialists respectfully pray that the
33 executive branch of the State of Washington and the legislative
34 authorities of each county promote a statewide effort to count and
35 track homeless individuals and children, as well as publicly highlight
36 and support successful homeless housing programs in the state.

37 BE IT RESOLVED, That copies of this Memorial be immediately

1 transmitted to the Honorable Christine Gregoire, Governor of the State
2 of Washington, the legislative authority of each county, and each
3 member of Congress from the State of Washington.

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