

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SSB 6024

As Reported by House Committee On: Human Services

Title: An act relating to applications for public assistance from persons currently ineligible to receive assistance.

Brief Description: Addressing applications for public assistance from persons currently ineligible to receive assistance.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Human Services & Corrections (originally sponsored by Senators Brandland, Hargrove, McAuliffe, Stevens and Carrell).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Human Services: 3/25/09, 3/26/09 [DP].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Allows a person to apply for public assistance even when the person is ineligible and the date on which the person will become eligible is either unknown or more than 45 days beyond the date of the application.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 8 members: Representatives Dickerson, Chair; Orwall, Vice Chair; Dammeier, Ranking Minority Member; Green, Klippert, Morrell, O'Brien and Walsh.

Staff: Linda Merelle (786-7092)

Background:

The state provides public assistance to persons in the state of Washington who meet income requirements and other eligibility criteria. State law prohibits a person who is not currently eligible for public assistance from applying for such assistance unless the person can show that he or she will become eligible within 45 days. This is generally known as the "45-day rule." Public assistance may include cash grants as well as medical assistance.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Although jail stays are typically short, persons in jail whose cases have not been adjudicated are unable to show that they will become eligible within 45 days. The 45-day rule has been applied to prevent jail detainees from applying for public assistance while in custody. Submitting an application prior to being released is a method for expediting the review process in advance of release.

Summary of Bill:

A person who is not currently eligible for public assistance may apply for such assistance even if the date on which the person will become eligible is either unknown or further away than 45 days. Public assistance may not be provided to a person while the person is residing in a jail, prison, or other public institution.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect on November 1, 2009.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) This bill is aimed at the mentally ill, particularly those who are in custody. This bill will eliminate the 45-day rule and allow persons to start the application process for public assistance so that they can start accessing services once they walk out of the door of a secure facility. If they can do this, there is less likelihood that they will return to jail. This will help some mentally ill offenders get the treatment that they need. When they get out of custody and do not have their medications, they decompensate. This bill will help prevent this.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Senator Brandland, prime sponsor; and Seth Dawson, National Alliance on Mental Health.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.