

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 6478

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As of January 26, 2010

**Title:** An act relating to planning for the discontinuation of discharge of vulnerable populations from state institutions into homelessness.

**Brief Description:** Planning for the discontinuation of discharge of vulnerable populations from state institutions into homelessness.

**Sponsors:** Senators Regala, Kline and Delvin.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Human Services & Corrections: 1/26/10.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES & CORRECTIONS

**Staff:** Shani Bauer (786-7468)

**Background:** Persons with criminal backgrounds, those exiting the foster care system, and those with mental health issues are at greater risk of homelessness than the general population.

According to the Department of Corrections (DOC), in August of 2008, of the 28,671 former prisoners who were actively supervised on probation, 3,867 were known to be homeless. According to the DOC 2006 GMAP report, a snapshot of offender data showed that 8 percent of actively supervised former prisoners re-offended, and 49 percent of those who reoffended did not have stable housing.

According to a national survey, 25 percent of foster youth reported that they had been homeless at least one night within 2.5 to 4 years after exiting foster care. In 2005, 805 children exited the foster care system in Washington State due to aging, transfer of custody, death, and no exit reason.

The 2007 State Mental Health Housing Plan published by the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) suggests that in 2005, there were approximately 6,000 consumers of public mental health services who experienced homelessness during the year in the five largest Regional Support Networks alone.

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*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.*

Data tracking for these populations is getting better. DOC has coding in their system to track the housing status of an offender at the time of release and while on supervision. The Department of Commerce has also developed the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). HMIS collects data about homeless clients by tapping into homeless service providers in Washington, such as emergency shelters, transitional housing, and supportive housing programs. These service providers collect information about their clients including the background of the person to determine what factors led to homelessness.

**Summary of Bill:** No later than December 1, 2010, DOC must submit a plan to the Legislature that proposes to eliminate the discharge of offenders from custody into homelessness or time-limited housing programs that do not provide housing for an offender greater than one year.

No later than December 1, 2010, the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) must submit a plan to the Legislature that proposes to eliminate the discharge into homelessness or time-limited housing programs that do not provide housing for a time period greater than one year for youth aging out of the foster care system, youth being discharged from juvenile justice system, persons discharged from mental institutions, and other persons receiving ongoing care for mental illness from regional support networks.

The plans must identify the resources necessary and actions required to accomplish the plan by 2015. Individuals with long-term disabilities must be discharged to permanent housing. Performance measures must also be addressed.

Prior to the discharge of an offender, DOC must record the housing status of the confirmed housing situations arranged for the offender pending the offender's release from custody. DOC must record the housing status of an offender as a data element for the duration of an offender's supervision and when otherwise obtaining and entering data on the offender's status.

As part of the independent youth housing program, DSHS must provide annually to the Department of Commerce, data reflecting the number of youth aging out of the state dependency system who do not have stable affordable housing upon discharge.

Prior to the release of a juvenile from the custody of the Juvenile Rehabilitation Administration, DSHS must record details regarding the confirmed housing situation arranged for the juvenile pending the juvenile's release from custody. For the duration of the juvenile's parole, DSHS must record housing status as a data element when otherwise obtaining and entering data on the juvenile's status.

DSHS must record the housing status of indigent patients when they are discharged from state hospitals. Regional Support Networks must track, as part of the patient tracking system, the housing status of patients receiving care from Regional Support Networks whenever there is a change in housing status, or at a minimum, once a year.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Requested on January 18, 2010.

**Committee/Commission/Task Force Created:** No.

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

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:** PRO: This is a planning bill, not a spending bill. We need to redirect the costs of the state system that result in cycles of recidivism, treatment, etc. People need stable housing before they can address their issues. Most of the provisions of this bill require tracking of housing status at the same time that other things about the discharged persons are being tracked. This bill does not conflict with the voucher program, but is planning for further stability for persons being released from corrections.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Bill Block, Committee to End Homelessness.