
Early Learning & Human Services Committee

HB 2518

Brief Description: Promoting the reduction of intergenerational poverty.

Sponsors: Representatives Sawyer, Walsh, Kagi, Kilduff, Zeiger, Reykdal, Frame, McBride, Ormsby, Walkinshaw, Gregerson, Bergquist and Stanford.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Establishes the Intergenerational Poverty Reform Commission (Commission) to develop two-generation strategies to reduce intergenerational poverty and welfare dependence in Washington, and establishes the Intergenerational Poverty Advisory Committee to advise the Commission in its duties.
- Requires the Commission to provide an annual report to the Governor, the Legislature, and the Legislative-Executive WorkFirst Oversight Task Force that includes recommendations on how the state should act to address issues relating to breaking the cycle of poverty and ending welfare dependency.
- Requires the Department of Social and Health Services establish and maintain a system to track intergenerational poverty and collaborate with the Commission in developing the annual report.

Hearing Date: 1/27/16

Staff: Ashley Paintner (786-7120).

Background:

The Department of Social and Health Services reports that nearly one out of every four Washington residents turns to the Economic Services Administration (ESA) for assistance with cash, food, child support, child care, disability determination, transition to employment, and other services. The ESA's core services include: poverty reduction and self-sufficiency, child support enforcement and financial recovery, and disability determination. The ESA is tasked

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with helping low-income people meet their basic needs and achieve economic independence through cash grants, food, and medical assistance; employment-focused services; and subsidized child care. Major programs include: Temporary Assistance for Needy Families and WorkFirst (Washington's Welfare to Work program); Basic Food (formerly the Food Stamp Program); Aged, Blind, or Disabled; Pregnant Women's Assistance; Refugee Cash Assistance; Working Connections Child Care; and medical assistance.

Summary of Bill:

Intergenerational Poverty Data System.

The Department of Social and Health Services (Department) is required to establish and maintain a system to track intergenerational poverty. The system will be used to:

- identify groups that have a high risk of experiencing poverty;
- identify patterns and trends that help explain intergenerational poverty;
- assist in the study and development of effective and efficient plans to help break the cycle of poverty; and
- gather and track available local, state, and national data.

In implementing the intergenerational poverty data system, the Department is required to collect, integrate, and analyze available data. The Department is also tasked with protecting the privacy of individuals living in poverty by using and distributing data in compliance with state and federal laws.

Intergenerational Poverty Reform Commission and Advisory Committee.

The Washington Intergenerational Poverty Reform Commission (Commission) is established and comprised of members from across different state agencies. The Commission is tasked with developing two-generation strategies to reduce intergenerational poverty and welfare dependence in Washington. The Intergenerational Poverty Advisory Committee (Advisory Committee) is established to advise the Commission in its duties. The Advisory Committee is comprised of representatives from advocacy groups, local government, academic institutions, and faith-based organizations and have expertise in childhood poverty and education issues.

The Commission must provide an annual report to the Governor, the Legislature, and the Legislative-Executive WorkFirst Oversight Task Force. The report must include:

- five-year and ten-year plans that outline the work completed by the Commission and summarize future goals, benchmarks, and recommendations;
- a summary of how the Commission fulfilled its statutory duties;
- information on policies, procedures, and programs that have been implemented or modified to help break the cycle of poverty and end welfare dependency for children in the state affected by intergenerational poverty; and
- recommendations on how the state should act to address issues relating to breaking the cycle of poverty.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Preliminary fiscal note available.

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