

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## SSB 5999

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### As Reported by House Committee On: Appropriations

**Title:** An act relating to the caseload forecast council.

**Brief Description:** Addressing the caseload forecast council.

**Sponsors:** Senate Committee on Ways & Means (originally sponsored by Senator Darneille).

#### **Brief History:**

##### **Committee Activity:**

Appropriations: 3/16/15, 4/7/15 [DP].

#### **Brief Summary of Substitute Bill**

- Requires the Caseload Forecast Council (CFC) to forecast the populations of children eligible for and served by the Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP).
- Requires the CFC to prepare the first ECEAP forecast in time to facilitate development of the Governor's budget for the 2016 legislative session.
- Removes the requirement that the CFC provide a courtesy forecast of the population eligible for Essential Needs and Housing Support.
- Removes the requirement that the Department of Early Learning and the Office of Financial Management review early learning forecasts and report to the Governor and Legislature.

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### HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

**Majority Report:** Do pass. Signed by 30 members: Representatives Hunter, Chair; Ormsby, Vice Chair; Chandler, Ranking Minority Member; Parker, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Wilcox, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Buys, Cody, Condotta, Dent, Dunshee, Fagan, Haler, Hansen, Hudgins, G. Hunt, S. Hunt, Jinkins, Kagi, Lytton, MacEwen, Magendanz, Pettigrew, Sawyer, Senn, Springer, Stokesbary, Sullivan, Taylor, Tharinger and Van Werven.

**Staff:** Rachele Harris (786-7137).

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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.*

## **Background:**

### Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program.

The Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP) is a preschool program administered by the Department of Early Learning (DEL) that provides early education support for eligible children and their families. The ECEAP is open to families with children not yet eligible for kindergarten when the family's income is at or below 110 percent of the federal poverty level. When there are more eligible children than available ECEAP slots, children are placed on a waitlist. In 2013 Senate Bill 5904 required expansion of the ECEAP to serve all eligible children by the 2018-2019 school year, at which point the program will be considered an entitlement. The DEL and the Office of Financial Management (OFM) prepare and review the caseload for the program annually. The DEL and the OFM report to the Governor and the Legislature about funding strategies to phase in funding to achieve statewide implementation by 2018-19.

### Caseload Forecast Council Forecasts.

The Caseload Forecast Council (CFC) is responsible for preparing and approving official state caseloads that project the populations expected to meet entitlement requirements and services. Caseloads are prepared for the following:

- public assistance programs;
- state correctional institutions;
- state correctional non-institutional supervision;
- state institutions for juvenile offenders;
- public school system;
- long-term care;
- medical assistance;
- foster care;
- adoption support; and
- the Washington College Bound Scholarship Program.

### Essential Needs and Housing Support.

The Essential Needs and Housing Support (ENHS) program was established in 2011. Administered by the Department of Commerce, the ENHS program provides non-cash housing and other assistance for some individuals who do not have gainful employment for at least 90 days by reason of mental or physical incapacity. Eligibility for the ENHS program is determined by the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS). Appropriations for the ENHS program are based on a courtesy forecast prepared by the CFC based on the Medical Care Services (MCS) population that is homeless. Medical Care Services is another state-funded program that provides medical benefits for individuals who are incapacitated from gainful employment for at least 90 days by reason of mental or physical incapacity. The ENHS program is funded by the Legislature as a block grant that the Department of Commerce distributes to counties.

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## **Summary of Bill:**

The CFC must prepare and approve a forecast of the children eligible for and the number of children actually served by the ECEAP. The CFC must provide the first of these forecasts in time to facilitate the Governor's budget development for the 2016 legislative session. This same requirement is removed from the responsibilities of the DEL and the OFM.

The CFC is no longer required to provide a courtesy forecast of the population eligible for the ENHS program.

The list of entities from which the CFC may request data and assistance is expanded to include the DEL, the Department of Corrections, the Health Care Authority, the Superintendent of Public Instruction, the Washington Student Achievement Council, and other agencies with caseloads forecasted by the CFC.

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**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

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

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:**

(In support) None.

(Opposed) None.

(Information only) The Caseload Forecast Council is a small agency with only nine staff. We are maxed out on work at this point and it's difficult to hire a part-time staff person. The Council has already absorbed other forecasts including Temporary Assistance for Needy Families and Working Childcare Connections. Given the current workload, a whole staff person is needed to complete the work required under the bill.

**Persons Testifying:** John Steiger, Caseload Forecast Council

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:** None.