

SENATE BILL REPORT

HB 2398

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Government Operations & Security, February 22, 2016

Title: An act relating to clarifying current requirements for public purchases of goods and services from nonprofit agencies for the blind.

Brief Description: Clarifying current requirements for public purchases of goods and services from nonprofit agencies for the blind.

Sponsors: Representatives Holy, Riccelli, Appleton, Haler, Stokesbary, Ormsby, Parker, Santos and S. Hunt.

Brief History: Passed House: 2/16/16, 97-0.

Committee Activity: Government Operations & Security: 2/22/16, 2/22/16 [DP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS & SECURITY

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Roach, Chair; Pearson, Vice Chair; Habib, McCoy and Takko.

Staff: Karen Epps (786-7424)

Background: State agencies, as well as counties, cities, and other political subdivisions; must purchase goods and services from nonprofit agencies for the blind whenever possible. To qualify, nonprofit agencies for the blind must be located in-state and must manufacture or distribute blind-made products. The goods and services must be equal in quality and price to those available from other sources.

In 2011, laws were enacted consolidating procurement functions of the Department of General Administration, the Department of Information Services, and the Office of Financial Management into the newly-created Department of Enterprise Services (DES). DES was tasked with implementing the reform and consolidation of state procurement practices and providing a report to the Governor with procurement reform recommendations by December 31, 2011.

Legislation reflecting these recommendations was enacted in 2012. DES oversees state procurement of goods and services. DES adopted uniform policies and procedures and provides training on best practices for state procurement.

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.

Summary of Bill: References to the law relating to the purchase of blind-made goods and services are added to the procurement statutes.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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 bill was brought by Lighthouse Industries. Lighthouse is a manufacturing entity that is owned and operated by people who are blind. The variety of products produced is amazing. There is currently a preference provision in the blind services statutes. Since it wasn't put in the government procurement statutes, it has been missed over the last fifty years. This bill restates the provision in the procurement statutes. The Lighthouse has been in the business of providing opportunities for employment for people who are blind, deaf and blind, and blind with other disabilities, for almost 100 years. This bill will go a long way in helping create and sustain more employment opportunities for people who are blind. There is a 70 percent unemployment rate for adults who are blind and one-third of the people who are blind live in poverty. This is an opportunity for the state to purchase quality products and also allow people who are blind to be gainfully employed.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Representative Holy, Prime Sponsor; Shawn Dobbs, Inland Northwest Lighthouse; Paula Hoffman, Seattle Lighthouse for the Blind.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.