

SENATE BILL REPORT

ESHB 2518

As of February 24, 2016

Title: An act relating to reducing intergenerational poverty.

Brief Description: Promoting the reduction of intergenerational poverty.

Sponsors: House Committee on Early Learning & Human Services (originally sponsored by Representatives Sawyer, Walsh, Kagi, Kilduff, Zeiger, Reykdal, Frame, McBride, Ormsby, Walkinshaw, Gregerson, Bergquist and Stanford).

Brief History: Passed House: 2/16/16, 75-22.

Committee Activity: Human Services, Mental Health & Housing: 2/22/16.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES, MENTAL HEALTH & HOUSING

Staff: Alison Mendiola (786-7444)

Background: The Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) 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 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; Basic Food (commonly known as food stamps); 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. DSHS is required to establish and maintain a system to gather information on 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

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- gather and track available local, state, and national data, including information on the impact of poverty on other areas of child and family well-being.

In implementing the intergenerational poverty data system, DSHS is required to collect, integrate, and analyze available data. DSHS 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 Reduction Commission and Advisory Committee. The Washington Intergenerational Poverty Reduction 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 must include diverse, statewide representation from public, nonprofit, and for-profit entities. Its membership must reflect regional, racial, and cultural diversity to adequately represent the needs of all children and families in the state.

In collaboration with DSHS and the Advisory Committee, 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 10-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: 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 aims to break the cycle of school-to-prison pipeline by tracking data and taking a look at all programs, financial overhead, and outcomes. While a lot of data already exists, this will help by tracking outcomes of children which doesn't currently happen. This will provide the option to develop metrics to reduce poverty and focus on what we know works. The system is made up of low-income families. Poverty needs to be addressed in order to address the number of kids coming into care; in terms of education outcomes poverty is the only factor. More attention needs to be paid to minority communities such as African American, Latino, Native American, etc. because they are disproportionately represented in poverty. When looking at data and statistics, children who grow up in poverty are more likely to commit crimes later in life as opposed to those

who grew up in a home with abuse and neglect. The relationship between poverty and crime needs to be analyzed, not ignored.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Representative Sawyer, Prime Sponsor; Laurie Lippold, Partners for Our Children; Donna Christensen, Washington State Catholic Conference; Laura Wells, Fight Crime: Invest in Kids; and Lori Pfingst, Washington Budget & Policy Center.

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