

SENATE BILL REPORT

SSB 5999

As Passed Senate, March 5, 2015

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: Ways & Means: 2/25/15, 2/27/15 [DPS, w/oRec].
Passed Senate: 3/05/15, 49-0.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5999 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Hill, Chair; Braun, Vice Chair; Dammeier, Vice Chair; Honeyford, Vice Chair, Capital Budget Chair; Hargrove, Ranking Member; Keiser, Assistant Ranking Member on the Capital Budget; Ranker, Ranking Minority Member, Operating; Bailey, Becker, Billig, Brown, Conway, Fraser, Hasegawa, Hatfield, Hewitt, Kohl-Welles, O'Ban, Parlette, Rolfes, Schoesler and Warnick.

Minority Report: That it be referred without recommendation.
Signed by Senator Padden.

Staff: Richard Ramsey (786-7412)

Background: The Essential Needs and Housing Support (ENHS) program was established in 2011 as a successor program to the Disability Lifeline program. The program provides housing vouchers and essential needs items, e.g. personal and home cleaning supplies, to persons who are determined by the Department of Social and Health Services to be unable to work for a period of at least 90 days due to physical or mental incapacity and who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. State funding is provided through the Department of Commerce to designated entities to serve a county. The designated entity must be a local government or community-based organization. The program's priority is to serve clients who are actually homeless.

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.

RCW 43.185C.220 directs appropriations for the program to be based on a courtesy forecast by the Caseload Forecast Council (CFC) of the Medical Care Services (MCS) population that is actually homeless. MCS is a state-funded program that provides limited medical assistance for low-income adults who are unable to work for at least 90 days due to a physical or mental incapacity; however, the majority of this population has been included in health coverage through Medicaid expansion under the Affordable Care Act. The Legislature funds ENHS as a block grant. Because the ENHS program also serves persons who are at risk, but not actually homeless, the courtesy forecast does not represent the full population being served by the program.

The Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP) was created in 1985. Children eligible for ECEAP are those not eligible for kindergarten whose family income is at or below 110 percent of the federal poverty level – \$24,250 for a family of four – and those children whose families are eligible for public assistance. All eligible children must be served in the 2018-19 school year. The Department of Early Learning and the Office of Financial Management report to the Governor and appropriate committees of the Legislature the funding necessary to achieve statewide implementation in the 2018-19 school year.

The CFC oversees the preparation of and approves official state caseloads. Caseloads project the number of persons expected to meet entitlement requirements and services for the following:

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

Summary of Substitute Bill: The CFC must forecast the number of children eligible for ECEAP. This requirement is removed from the Department of Early Learning and the Office of Financial Management. The requirement for the CFC to prepare a courtesy forecast for the ENHS program is removed.

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 on Original Bill: PRO: The CFC supports this bill. The courtesy forecast for the ENHS program has outlived its usefulness. The fiscal note reflects the CFC's need to hire a PhD-level forecaster.

Persons Testifying: PRO: John Steiger, Executive Director, CFC.