
HOUSE BILL 2113

State of Washington

64th Legislature

2015 Regular Session

By Representatives Walkinshaw, Walsh, Kagi, Johnson, Appleton, Sawyer, Kilduff, Stanford, Jenkins, Zeiger, Santos, Ortiz-Self, Pollet, and Ormsby

Read first time 02/13/15. Referred to Committee on Early Learning & Human Services.

1 AN ACT Relating to creating a legislative task force on poverty;
2 creating new sections; and providing an expiration date.

3 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** (1) The legislature recognizes that
5 poverty in Washington state is a reality for far too many of our
6 residents and recognizes the inherent dignity of every human being.
7 14.1 percent of the people live in poverty and of those people: 18.8
8 percent are children; 21.5 percent are persons living with
9 disabilities; and 8.1 percent are our elders. Sixty-four percent of
10 those who are homeless are persons of color.

11 (2) Poverty impacts a significant number of state programs and
12 services. A child who is homeless is eighty-seven percent more likely
13 to drop out of school. Temporary assistance for needy families
14 benefits for a family of three are four hundred seventy eight dollars
15 per month, thirty percent of the federal poverty level. The lack of
16 accessible housing remains a significant problem. Those living in
17 poverty suffer from greater health problems. The majority of persons
18 in our juvenile justice and corrections systems come from poverty.
19 Furthermore, income inequality continues to increase.

20 (3) The legislature recognizes that developing a state focused
21 plan of action toward reducing poverty would have a positive impact

1 on those living in poverty and state programs costs. A focused plan
2 of action would use state resources in a more efficient manner and
3 could potentially result in decreased needs. The convening of thought
4 leaders from across the public, private, and nonprofit sectors to
5 develop such a plan can lead to reductions in the number of persons
6 living in poverty.

7 (4) The legislature intends to establish a legislative task force
8 to develop such a plan.

9 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** (1)(a) A legislative task force on
10 poverty is established, with members as provided in this subsection.

11 (i) The president of the senate shall appoint one member from
12 each of the two largest caucuses of the senate.

13 (ii) The speaker of the house of representatives shall appoint
14 one member from each of the two largest caucuses of the house of
15 representatives.

16 (iii) The president of the senate and the speaker of the house of
17 representatives jointly shall appoint eleven members representing
18 nonprofit and for-profit private sector interests with extensive
19 knowledge in serving persons living in poverty.

20 (b) The task force shall choose an executive committee to lead
21 the task force. The task force may appoint subcommittees and develop
22 a process for including stakeholders in the work of the task force.

23 (2) The task force shall develop a comprehensive plan for more
24 effective and efficient poverty relief solutions through
25 identification of pathways out of poverty. System change, bringing
26 down funding barriers, recognizing the individualized approach to
27 create poverty relief, establishing goals, measuring outcomes, and
28 more must be included in the plan.

29 (3) Staff support for the task force must be provided by the
30 senate committee services and the house of representatives office of
31 program research.

32 (4) The task force shall meet quarterly.

33 (5) The task force shall report its initial findings to the
34 appropriate committees of the legislature by December 1, 2015. A
35 final report is due December 1, 2016.

36 (6) This section expires December 31, 2017.

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