
SUBSTITUTE HOUSE BILL 2518

State of Washington

64th Legislature

2016 Regular Session

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

READ FIRST TIME 02/03/16.

1 AN ACT Relating to reducing intergenerational poverty; and adding
2 a new chapter to Title 74 RCW.

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

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** (1) The legislature finds that
5 intergenerational poverty, which passes from parents to children,
6 should be distinguished from situational poverty, which occurs after
7 an event like losing employment. Intergenerational poverty can affect
8 the lives of many future children and generations without the
9 development of specific strategies to stop this cycle.

10 (2) The legislature finds that it is necessary to bring together
11 state agencies and other stakeholders to collect data regarding
12 intergenerational poverty and develop two generation-specific
13 strategies to provide families the support they need to overcome a
14 history of poverty.

15 (3) The legislature intends to create a data system that allows
16 for meaningful analysis of intergenerational poverty for the purposes
17 of policy and program development. The legislature further intends to
18 create an intergenerational poverty reduction commission and an
19 intergenerational poverty advisory committee and require the
20 commission to provide an annual report in order to lay the groundwork
21 in Washington for reducing intergenerational poverty.

1 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** The definitions in this section apply
2 throughout this chapter unless the context clearly requires
3 otherwise.

4 (1) "Commission" means the commission on intergenerational
5 poverty reduction.

6 (2) "Cycle of poverty" or "poverty cycle" means the set of
7 factors or events by which the long-term poverty of a person is
8 likely to continue and be experienced by each child of the person
9 when the child becomes an adult unless there is outside intervention.

10 (3) "Intergenerational poverty" means poverty in which two or
11 more successive generations of a family continue in the cycle of
12 poverty and governmental dependence, and is not situational poverty.

13 (4) "Poverty" means the state of a person who lacks a usual or
14 socially acceptable amount of money or material possessions as
15 demonstrated by the person's income level being at or below two
16 hundred percent of the federal poverty level as defined by the most
17 recently revised poverty income guidelines as published by the United
18 States department of health and human services in the federal
19 register.

20 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** (1) The department shall establish and
21 maintain a system to track intergenerational poverty, which must:

22 (a) Identify groups that have a high risk of experiencing
23 intergenerational poverty;

24 (b) Identify incidents, patterns, and trends that explain or
25 contribute to intergenerational poverty;

26 (c) Assist case workers, social scientists, and government
27 officials in the study and development of effective and efficient
28 plans and programs to help individuals and families in the state to
29 break the cycle of poverty; and

30 (d) Gather and track available local, state, and national data
31 on:

32 (i) Official poverty rates;

33 (ii) Child poverty rates;

34 (iii) Years spent by individuals in childhood poverty;

35 (iv) Years spent by individuals in adult poverty; and

36 (v) Information on the impact of poverty and economic hardship on
37 other areas of child and family well-being, including but not limited
38 to early learning, K-12 education, higher education, health, criminal
39 justice, child welfare, and employment.

1 (2) To the extent available, data collected pursuant to this
2 section must be broken down by:

3 (a) Detailed racial ethnic groups and subgroups;

4 (b) Nativity;

5 (c) Age;

6 (d) Sex and gender; and

7 (e) Local geographies, including urban, suburban, rural, and
8 census tract.

9 (3) In implementing the intergenerational poverty tracking
10 system, the department shall:

11 (a) Use available data in the tracking system, including public
12 assistance data, census data, and other data made available to the
13 department;

14 (b) Develop and implement methods to integrate, compare, analyze,
15 and validate the data for the purposes described in subsection (1) of
16 this section;

17 (c) Protect the privacy of individuals living in poverty by using
18 and distributing data within the tracking system in compliance with
19 RCW 74.04.060, and other applicable state and federal laws;

20 (d) Include in the annual written report described in section 8
21 of this act, a report on the data, findings, and potential uses of
22 the tracking system.

23 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** There is created the Washington
24 intergenerational poverty reduction commission composed of the
25 following voting members:

26 (1) The secretary of the department or his or her designee;

27 (2) The secretary of health or his or her designee;

28 (3) The superintendent of public instruction or his or her
29 designee;

30 (4) The executive director of the state board for community and
31 technical colleges or his or her designee;

32 (5) The commissioner of the employment security department or his
33 or her designee;

34 (6) The director of the department of commerce or his or her
35 designee;

36 (7) The director of the department of early learning or his or
37 her designee; and

38 (8) The chair of the intergenerational poverty advisory committee
39 created in section 7 of this act.

1 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 5.** (1) The commission shall be cochaired by
2 the secretary of the department or his or her designee and the chair
3 of the intergenerational poverty advisory committee or his or her
4 designee.

5 (2) The cochairs:

6 (a) Are responsible for the call and conduct of meetings;

7 (b) Shall call and hold meetings of the commission at least
8 quarterly; and

9 (c) Shall call additional meetings upon request by a majority of
10 the commission's voting members.

11 (3) A majority of the voting members of the commission
12 constitutes a quorum of the commission at any meeting and the action
13 of the majority of voting members present is the action of the
14 commission.

15 (4) The department shall provide staff support to the commission.

16 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 6.** (1) The commission's purpose is to:

17 (a) Collaborate in sharing and analyzing data and information
18 regarding intergenerational poverty in the state with a primary focus
19 on data and information regarding children who are at risk of
20 continuing the cycle of poverty and welfare dependency unless outside
21 intervention is made;

22 (b) Examine and analyze shared data and information regarding
23 intergenerational poverty, including the data provided by the
24 intergenerational poverty report described in section 8 of this act,
25 to identify and develop effective and efficient plans, programs, and
26 recommendations to help at-risk children in the state escape the
27 cycle of poverty and welfare dependency;

28 (c) Implement data-driven policies and programs addressing
29 poverty, public assistance, education, and other areas as needed to
30 measurably reduce the incidence of children in the state who remain
31 in the cycle of poverty and welfare dependency as they become adults;

32 (d) Establish and facilitate improved cooperation between state
33 agencies down to the case worker level in rescuing children from
34 intergenerational poverty and welfare dependency; and

35 (e) Collaborate with the intergenerational poverty advisory
36 committee established in section 7 of this act and other community
37 resources, including academic experts, advocacy groups, nonprofit
38 corporations, local governments, and religious institutions in
39 exploring strategies and solutions to help children in the state who

1 are victims of intergenerational poverty escape the cycle of poverty
2 and welfare dependency.

3 (2) The commission shall:

4 (a) Fulfill the commission's purposes as listed in subsection (1)
5 of this section;

6 (b) Study, evaluate, and report on the status and effectiveness
7 of policies, procedures, and programs that provide services to
8 children in the state affected by intergenerational poverty and
9 welfare dependency;

10 (c) Study and evaluate the policies, procedures, and programs
11 implemented by other states and nongovernmental entities that address
12 the needs of children affected by intergenerational poverty and
13 welfare dependency;

14 (d)(i) Identify policies, procedures, and programs, including any
15 lack of interagency data sharing, lack of policy coordination, or
16 current federal requirements, that are impeding efforts to help
17 children in the state affected by intergenerational poverty escape
18 the poverty cycle and welfare dependency; and

19 (ii) Implement and recommend changes to those policies and
20 procedures;

21 (e) Create an ongoing five and ten-year plan, which is updated
22 annually, containing:

23 (i) Measurable goals and benchmarks, including future action
24 needed to attain those goals and benchmarks, for decreasing the
25 incidence of intergenerational poverty among the state's children and
26 increasing the number of the state's children who escape the poverty
27 cycle and welfare dependency;

28 (ii) Implement policy, procedure, and program changes to address
29 the needs of children affected by intergenerational poverty and help
30 those children escape the poverty cycle and welfare dependency,
31 including, as available over time, data to track the effectiveness of
32 each change; and

33 (iii) Recommend policy, procedure, and program changes to address
34 the needs of children affected by intergenerational poverty and to
35 help those children escape the poverty cycle and welfare dependency,
36 including the steps that will be required to make the recommended
37 changes and whether further action is required by the legislature or
38 the federal government;

1 (f) Ensure that each change and recommended change to a policy,
2 procedure, or program, which is made by the commission, is supported
3 by verifiable data;

4 (g) Protect the privacy of individuals living in poverty by using
5 and distributing the data it collects or examines in compliance with
6 RCW 74.04.060 and other applicable federal and state requirements;
7 and

8 (h) Provide a forum for public comment and participation in
9 efforts to help children in the state escape the cycle of poverty and
10 welfare dependency.

11 (3) To accomplish its duties, the commission may:

12 (a) Request and receive from any state or local governmental
13 agency or institution, information relating to poverty in the state,
14 including:

15 (i) Reports;

16 (ii) Audits;

17 (iii) Data;

18 (iv) Projections; and

19 (v) Statistics; and

20 (b) Appoint special committees, in addition to the advisory
21 committee described in section 7 of this act, to advise and assist
22 the commission.

23 (4)(a) Members of a special committee described in subsection
24 (3)(b) of this section shall be appointed by the commission and may
25 include:

26 (i) Members of the commission; or

27 (ii) Individuals from the private or public sector.

28 (b) Nonlegislative members are not entitled to be reimbursed for
29 travel expenses if they are elected officials or are participating on
30 behalf of an employer, governmental entity, or other organization.
31 Any reimbursement for other nonlegislative members is subject to
32 chapter 43.03 RCW.

33 (c) A special committee described in subsection (3)(b) of this
34 section shall report to the commission on the progress of the special
35 committee.

36 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 7.** (1) To assist the commission, there is
37 created the intergenerational poverty advisory committee.

38 (2) The advisory committee shall include diverse, statewide
39 representation from public, nonprofit, and for-profit entities. Its

1 membership shall reflect regional, racial, and cultural diversity to
2 adequately represent the needs of all children and families in the
3 state.

4 (3) Members of the advisory committee shall be appointed by the
5 secretary of the department, with the approval of the commission.

6 (4) The advisory committee shall consist of not more than fifteen
7 members and shall include representatives from:

8 (a) Advocacy groups that focus on childhood poverty issues;

9 (b) Advocacy groups that focus on education issues;

10 (c) Academic experts in childhood poverty or education issues;

11 (d) Faith-based organizations that address childhood poverty or
12 education issues;

13 (e) Tribal governments;

14 (f) Families impacted by poverty;

15 (g) Local government representatives that address childhood
16 poverty or education issues; and

17 (h) The commission on African-American affairs, the state
18 commission on Hispanic affairs, the state commission on Asian Pacific
19 American affairs, and the governor's office of Indian affairs.

20 (5) Subject to subsection (6) of this section, each member of the
21 advisory committee shall be appointed for a four-year term unless a
22 member is appointed to complete an unexpired term.

23 (6) The secretary of the department may adjust the length of term
24 at the time of appointment or reappointment so that approximately
25 half of the advisory committee is appointed every two years.

26 (7) The secretary of the department may remove an advisory
27 committee member:

28 (a) If the member is unable or unwilling to carry out the
29 member's assigned responsibilities; or

30 (b) For good cause.

31 (8) If a vacancy occurs in the advisory committee membership for
32 any reason, a replacement may be appointed for the unexpired term.

33 (9) The advisory committee shall choose its chair from among its
34 membership. The secretary of the department shall convene the initial
35 meeting of the advisory committee.

36 (10) A majority of the advisory committee constitutes a quorum of
37 the advisory committee at any meeting and the action of the majority
38 of members present is the action of the advisory committee.

39 (11) The advisory committee shall:

1 (a) Meet at least twice a year at the request of the commission
2 chair or the chair of the advisory committee;

3 (b) Make recommendations to the commission on how the commission
4 and the state can effectively address the needs of children affected
5 by intergenerational poverty and achieve the purposes and duties of
6 the commission as described in section 6 of this act; and

7 (c) Ensure that the advisory committee's recommendations to the
8 commission are supported by verifiable data.

9 (12) The department shall provide staff support to the advisory
10 committee.

11 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 8.** (1) Beginning October 15, 2017, and each
12 October 15th thereafter, the commission, in collaboration with the
13 department and the advisory committee, shall provide an annual report
14 to the governor, the appropriate committees of the legislature, and
15 the WorkFirst legislative executive task force.

16 (2) The report must:

17 (a) Include the five and ten-year plans described in section
18 6(2)(e) of this act;

19 (b) Describe how the commission fulfilled its statutory purposes
20 and duties during the year;

21 (c) Describe policies, procedures, and programs that have been
22 implemented or modified to help break the cycle of poverty and end
23 welfare dependency for children in the state affected by
24 intergenerational poverty; and

25 (d) Contain recommendations on how the state should act to
26 address issues relating to breaking the cycle of poverty and ending
27 welfare dependency for children in the state affected by
28 intergenerational poverty.

29 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 9.** Sections 1 through 8 of this act
30 constitute a new chapter in Title 74 RCW.

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