

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1482

As Reported by House Committee On:
Early Learning & Human Services
Appropriations

Title: An act relating to establishing the legislative-executive WorkFirst poverty reduction oversight task force.

Brief Description: Establishing the legislative-executive WorkFirst poverty reduction oversight task force.

Sponsors: Representatives Sawyer, Kagi, Stambaugh, Caldier, Robinson, Springer, Hargrove, Tarleton, Ormsby, Doglio and Stanford.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Early Learning & Human Services: 2/3/17, 2/7/17 [DPS];
Appropriations: 2/21/17 [DP2S(w/o sub ELHS)].

Brief Summary of Second Substitute Bill

- Renames the Legislative-Executive WorkFirst Oversight Task Force as the Legislative-Executive WorkFirst Poverty Reduction Oversight Task Force (Task Force) and modifies Task Force membership.
- Establishes goals and reporting requirements for the Task Force.
- Creates the Intergenerational Poverty Advisory Committee to advise the Task Force.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & HUMAN SERVICES

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 12 members: Representatives Kagi, Chair; Senn, Vice Chair; Dent, Ranking Minority Member; McDonald, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Frame, Goodman, Griffey, Klippert, Lovick, McCaslin, Muri and Ortiz-Self.

Staff: Dawn Eychaner (786-7135).

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.

Background:

WorkFirst Program.

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) is a federal block grant that provides temporary cash assistance, subsidized childcare, and work programs for families. The Washington WorkFirst TANF Act of 1997 created the WorkFirst program. With limited exceptions, adult TANF recipients must participate in one or more WorkFirst activities. These activities may include paid and unpaid employment based training programs; career development; community service; work skills assessment and job hunting training; and vocational training programs. WorkFirst participants may receive additional services such as child support collection, food assistance, and subsidized childcare.

The Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) administers the WorkFirst program in partnership with the Department of Commerce (COM), the Department of Early Learning (DEL), the Employment Security Department (ESD), the Office of Financial Management (OFM), and the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC).

Legislative-Executive WorkFirst Oversight Task Force.

The Legislative-Executive WorkFirst Oversight Task Force (Task Force) was established in 2011 to oversee a redesign of the WorkFirst program and the operation of the TANF program.

The Task Force is composed of eight legislative members and six Governor-appointed agency representatives. Agencies represented include the DSHS, the COM, the DEL, the ESD, the OFM, and the SBCTC.

Intergenerational Poverty.

Intergenerational poverty refers to two or more consecutive generations of a family experiencing poverty. According to the United States Census Bureau, approximately 12 percent of Washington's population is living under the federal poverty level. The 2016 federal poverty guideline for a household of four is a monthly income of \$2,025.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

Legislative-Executive WorkFirst Poverty Reduction Oversight Task Force.

The Legislative-Executive WorkFirst Oversight Task Force is renamed as the Legislative-Executive WorkFirst Poverty Reduction Oversight Task Force (Task Force) and is tasked with the goals of:

- reducing the overall percentage of people living below 200 percent of the federal poverty level by 50 percent by the year 2025; and
- preventing and addressing adverse childhood experiences and the trauma of children living in poverty.

The Task Force must review laws and budget appropriations for their impacts on Task Force goals and collaborate with the Intergenerational Poverty Advisory Committee (Committee), partner agencies, and stakeholders to share and analyze data and develop poverty reduction strategies.

Intergenerational Poverty Advisory Committee.

The Committee is created to advise the Task Force. Committee members are appointed by the Secretary of the DSHS. The Committee must choose co-chairs from among its membership.

Committee members must include representatives of advocacy groups, academic experts in childhood poverty or education, faith-based organizations, tribal governments, families impacted by poverty, local government, the business community, the Commission on African-American Affairs, the Commission on Hispanic Affairs, the Commission on Asian Pacific American Affairs, and the Governor's Office of Indian Affairs.

Task Force Membership.

The OFM is removed as a Task Force member. Representatives from the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, the Department of Corrections, and the co-chairs of the Committee are added as voting members of the Task Force. The total number of voting members of the Task Force is increased from 10 to 13.

The Governor must direct representatives from the Department of Health, the Health Care Authority, and the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board to serve in an advisory capacity to the Task Force. The Governor must also request the participation of tribal governments.

Data and Reporting.

The DSHS may establish a data tracking system to track specified criteria related to poverty rates and trends. The data may be used to support recommendations made by the Committee and may be shared with the Task Force.

The Task Force must direct the DSHS to develop five and 10 year plans to address intergenerational poverty. Subject to approval by the Task Force, the DSHS must submit the plans to the Governor and the Legislature by December 1, 2018.

Beginning December 1, 2019, the Task Force must report annually to the Governor and the Legislature on progress towards meeting the goals of poverty reduction and the prevention of adverse childhood experiences and trauma for children living in poverty.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The Governor must appoint only one member from each agency represented on the Task Force and each agency serving in an advisory capacity to the Task Force.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) Agencies often work in silos and don't always share data. This brings agencies together to determine what works best to break the cycle of poverty. The expansion of the mission of the Task Force is not intended to take away from the focus on TANF, but rather to look comprehensively at the issues facing families and focus on outcomes after families move off TANF. Disparities for children of color living in poverty are real and this bill will help address root causes of poverty. Consider adding a representative from an urban Indian organization and experts in adult criminal justice and juvenile justice to the Task Force.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Sawyer, prime sponsor; Julie Watts, Washington State Budget and Policy Center; David Hlebain, Statewide Poverty Action Network; Bob Cooper, National Association of Social Workers; Laurie Lippold, Partners for Our Children; and David Stillman, Department of Social and Health Services.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Majority Report: The second substitute bill be substituted therefor and the second substitute bill do pass and do not pass the substitute bill by Committee on Early Learning & Human Services. Signed by 20 members: Representatives Ormsby, Chair; Robinson, Vice Chair; Bergquist, Caldier, Cody, Fitzgibbon, Hansen, Hudgins, Jinkins, Kagi, Lytton, Manweller, Pettigrew, Pollet, Sawyer, Senn, Springer, Stanford, Sullivan and Tharinger.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 11 members: Representatives Chandler, Ranking Minority Member; Buys, Condotta, Haler, Harris, Nealey, Schmick, Taylor, Vick, Volz and Wilcox.

Minority Report: Without recommendation. Signed by 2 members: Representatives MacEwen, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Stokesbary, Assistant Ranking Minority Member.

Staff: Kelci Karl-Robinson (786-7116).

Summary of Recommendation of Committee On Appropriations Compared to Recommendation of Committee On Early Learning & Human Services:

The second substitute bill adds a null and void clause.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date of Second Substitute Bill: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed. However, the bill is null and void unless funded in the budget.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) There are many programs that deal with situational poverty when individuals find themselves without means due to a medical issue or when something happens to the individual primarily responsible for the finances in the family. The bill attempts to break the cycle of intergenerational poverty for those born into poverty. A diverse panel of members of an advisory committee will analyze how poverty impacts different parts of the state and distinct groups with the goal of reducing poverty by half. Instead of creating a new task force, the bill utilizes the current bipartisan taskforce and broadens the scope to focus on other measures of poverty. The advisory committee would be able to determine if the state is making progress toward the goal and provide feedback to the Legislature. Family poverty is associated with increased child welfare involvement, housing instability, food insecurity, and chronic illness. Extreme poverty in childhood is associated with toxic stress, which negatively impacts brain development and a child's ability to learn. The advisory committee will focus on how the dollars are being spent and ensure the dollars are going towards services and programs that reduce poverty and ultimately improve outcomes. Programs addressing the root causes of intergenerational poverty could be expanded across the state. The hope is to expand programs to focus not only on a single generation, but on the entire family and help future generations.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Alex Hur, Statewide Poverty Action Network; Laurie Lippold, Partners for Our Children; and Melanie Smith, Wellspring Family Services.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.