

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## HB 1085

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As Reported by Senate Committee On:  
Local Government, February 15, 2018

**Title:** An act relating to regulation of the minimum dimensions of habitable spaces in single-family residential buildings.

**Brief Description:** Regulating the minimum dimensions of habitable spaces in single-family residential areas.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Blake, Vick, Walsh, Chapman, Buys and McBride.

**Brief History:** Passed House: 1/24/18, 97-0.

**Committee Activity:** Local Government: 2/01/18, 2/15/18 [DP].

### Brief Summary of Bill

- Permits cities and counties to eliminate minimum floor space requirements for single family detached homes, or reduce any such standards below any minimum standards in the State Building Code (SBC).

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT

**Majority Report:** Do pass.

Signed by Senators Takko, Chair; Palumbo, Vice Chair; Short, Ranking Member; Angel and Liias.

**Staff:** Bonnie Kim (786-7316)

**Background:** The SBC provides a set of statewide standards and requirements related to building construction. The SBC is comprised of various international model codes, including building, residential, fire, and plumbing codes (model codes) adopted by reference by the Legislature. The model codes are promulgated by the International Code Council.

The State Building Code Council (SBCC) is responsible for adopting, amending, and maintaining the SBC. The SBCC must regularly review updated versions of the model codes and adopt a process for reviewing proposed statewide and local amendments. Cities and

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counties may amend the SBC as applied within their jurisdiction, except that amendments may not be below minimum performance standards, and no amendment affecting single or multifamily residential buildings may be effective until approved by the SBCC.

The International Residential Code (IRC) is one of the model codes adopted by the Legislature. The IRC creates minimum standards for one or two family dwellings. The current version of the IRC, last adopted in 2015, requires that habitable rooms—except kitchens—must have a floor area of at least 70 square feet and must be at least 7 feet wide.

Local Development Regulations. Cities and counties engaging in comprehensive planning may enact ordinances regulating the use of land and zoning certain development and activities. Such regulations generally include: the location, construction and size of buildings for residence, industry, trade, and other purposes; the height, construction, and design of buildings and structures; the size of yards, open spaces, lots, and tracts; the density of population; the set-back of buildings; and the subdivision and development of land.

**Summary of Bill:** The governing body of a city or county may eliminate any minimum floor space requirements for single-family detached dwellings, or reduce requirements below the minimum standards in the SBC.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

**Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members:** No.

**Effective Date:** Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:** PRO: This bill gives more flexibility to local governments to get out from under minimum size requirements from the SBCC. These minimum standards have prevented many attempts to develop smaller housing units.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Roger Valdez, Seattle for Growth.

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