

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5077

As of January 22, 2017

Title: An act relating to allowing the department of corrections to provide temporary housing assistance to individuals being released from the Washington corrections center for women.

Brief Description: Allowing the department of corrections to provide temporary housing assistance to individuals being released from the Washington corrections center for women.

Sponsors: Senators Angel, Darneille, Padden, Wilson, Rolfes, Keiser, Mullet, Wellman, Conway and Saldaña.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Law & Justice: 1/18/17.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Allows the Department of Corrections (DOC) to provide rental vouchers for up to three months to any person releasing from the Washington Corrections Center for Women (WCCW), if the assistance will support the person's release into the community.
- Requires DOC to submit a report no later than November 1, 2020, to the Legislature on the effectiveness of providing rental vouchers to persons releasing from WCCW.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON LAW & JUSTICE

Staff: Shani Bauer (786-7468)

Background: Before a person may be released from confinement to community custody, DOC must approve the person's release plan. The release plan includes the specific residence and living arrangements of the person. DOC can deny the person's release plan if the person does not have an approved living arrangement. In 2009, the Legislature authorized DOC to provide rental vouchers to a releasing person for a period up to three months, if the vouchers will assist the person in obtaining an approved living arrangement. Only persons releasing to community custody are eligible for rental vouchers.

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.

Any person releasing from DOC must be provided with suitable clothing, the sum of \$40, and transportation, not to exceed \$100, from the place of release to the person's residence. An additional \$60 may be provided for personal and living expenses upon application and approval by the person's community corrections officer.

Summary of Bill: Within existing funds, DOC may provide rental vouchers for a period up to three months to any person releasing from WCCW if the assistance will support the person's release into the community.

No later than November 1, 2020, DOC must submit a report to the Legislature, detailing:

- the number of individuals provided with housing assistance;
- the ability of the individual to maintain housing at the conclusion of the rental voucher period; and
- the recidivism rate of those provided with housing assistance.

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 is a good little bill to give DOC the authority to provide temporary housing to women exiting the system who might otherwise be homeless. Homelessness is a contributing factor to recidivism. Three months is a reasonable time period and the bill requires DOC to report back to see if the assistance has an impact on recidivism. Transition from prison to the community poses risk. Stable housing is one area where DOC can insert some stability. Fifteen women from WCCW and one woman from Stafford Creek Correctional Center for Women (SCCCW) released homeless last year. SCCCW is a minimum security facility for women serving women who have five years or left to serve of their sentence. SCCCW should also be added to this bill.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Jan Angel, Prime Sponsor; Devon Schrum, Department of Corrections.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: PRO: Nancy Sapiro, National Council of Jewish Women; Jewish Family Services, Jewish Federation of Greater Seattle.