

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5485

As of February 14, 2017

Title: An act relating to collecting data on hunger in Washington state.

Brief Description: Collecting data on hunger in Washington state.

Sponsors: Senators Billig, Miloscia, Keiser and Darneille.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Human Services, Mental Health & Housing: 2/01/17.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Directs the Department of Health (Department) to conduct research on food insecurity in Washington.
- Requires the Department to report on ongoing United States Department of Agriculture funded nutrition assistance programs in the state by December 31, 2018, and annually thereafter.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES, MENTAL HEALTH & HOUSING

Staff: Alison Mendiola (786-7444)

Background: Food Assistance Programs. Washington provides food assistance to Washington residents through five state agencies: the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS), the Department of Health (Department), the Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA), and the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI).

Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System Survey (BRFSS). Funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and federal agencies, the BRFSS is a system of health-related telephone surveys that collect state data about U.S. residents regarding their health-related risk behaviors, chronic health conditions, and use of preventive services. Established in 1984 with 15 states, BRFSS now collects data in all 50 states. States can add questions to the BRFSS for their own research.

Summary of Bill: Beginning in 2018 and every two years thereafter, the Department must add the USDA two-question food insecurity screen to the behavioral risk factor surveillance

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survey. The two-part questions are: (1) within the past 12 months, we worried whether our food would run out before we got money to buy more; and (2) within the past 12 months, the food we bought just didn't last and we didn't have enough money to get more.

Beginning in 2018 and annually thereafter, the Department must produce a report on ongoing USDA funded nutrition assistance programs in Washington State. The report is to include information from every state agency that administers an ongoing USDA nutrition assistance program, including the Department, OSPI, and WSDA. The information collected must include, but is not limited to, the number of people in Washington who are eligible for the program, the number of people in Washington who participated in the program, the average annual participation rate in the program, participation rates by geographic distribution, the annual federal funding of the program, and other criteria that may be developed.

By January 1, 2018, the Department, in consultation with advocacy groups and experts that focus on hunger and poverty issues, poverty and nutrition issues, and race issues, as well as community-based organizations that administer federal nutrition programs, tribal governments, and families impacted by poverty, must develop additional criteria for its annual report, including but not limited to: (1) performance benchmarks for programs in Washington State, with a focus on existing benchmarks, (2) geography, (3) socioeconomic characteristics of households, and (4) degree of disaggregation of racial and ethnic groups.

The Department must provide a report on the compliance of state agencies sharing required information to the Legislature and to the governor by December 31, 2018, and annually thereafter.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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: There are over 316,000 kids in food insecure households in our state but what they don't know is where they are, such as rural vs. urban. Also food insecurity disproportionately impacts communities of color. The impact of being a food insecure household has an even greater detrimental impact to children as this impacts future success and academic achievement. Food insecure is an official USDA definition, if you don't have the resources for consistent nutritious food then your household is food insecure. Once we know where food insecure households are, we can target services accordingly. For example, we know that South King County is twice as food insecure as the rest of King County therefore resources have been targeted accordingly. Funders use this data to target its resources. This bill promotes data sharing among state agencies administering food programs funded by the USDA. It's about efficiency. Once we have the data we need, we can better help the citizens of our state. This is not about creating new data, but rather adding on to an existing survey.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Andy Billig, Prime Sponsor; Jennifer Tran, Washington Budget & Policy Center; Barb Houston-Shimizu, South King Co Food Coalition; Nick Federici, United Way of King Co; Claire Lane, Anti-Hunger & Nutrition Coalition.

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