
**State Government & Tribal Relations
Committee**

HB 1643

Brief Description: Concerning property ownership for participants in the address confidentiality program.

Sponsors: Representatives Doglio, Walsh, Dolan, Irwin, Orwall, Lovick, Macri, Appleton, Shewmake, Jinkins, Davis, Frame and Leavitt.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires the Secretary of State to contract with an outside organization to provide free legal assistance to participants in the Address Confidentiality Program that wish to own property without disclosing their address.

Hearing Date: 2/5/19

Staff: Jason Zolle (786-7124).

Background:

In 1991 the state created an Address Confidentiality Program (ACP) to protect people who are attempting to escape from domestic violence, sexual assault, trafficking, or stalking. The ACP helps preserve the confidentiality of a person's address by allowing the person to use a substitute mailing address designated by the Secretary of State (Secretary) for purposes of government records. In practice, an ACP participant receives a P.O. Box address in Olympia to use on government documents. The Secretary forwards mail from the P.O. Box to the ACP participant's real address. More than 4,500 people are served by the ACP.

A person who wishes to participate in the ACP applies to the Secretary with a sworn statement that the applicant (or the minor or incapacitated person on whose behalf the application is made) is a victim of domestic violence, sexual assault, trafficking, or stalking and fears for his or her or his or her children's safety. An applicant may also be a criminal justice participant—e.g., a law

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enforcement officer, corrections officer, and prosecuting or defense attorney—who is the target of unlawful threats or harassment. Applicants may receive assistance from local agencies and nonprofits that provide counseling and shelter services to victims.

Other than the ACP participants' public address designated by the Secretary, participant files may not be disclosed, except by court order or to law enforcement in certain circumstances. Names of ACP participants are not included in lists of registered voters.

Washington's ACP was the first such program in the nation, and approximately 35 other states have established similar programs.

Summary of Bill:

The Secretary must contract with an outside organization to provide free legal assistance to ACP participants who wish to own property without publicly disclosing their address. The Secretary and assisting agencies must publicize the availability of legal assistance for this purpose.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 1, 2019.

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