

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SSB 5265

As Passed House:

April 9, 2019

Title: An act relating to encouraging the role of volunteerism within state government.

Brief Description: Concerning the role of volunteerism within state government.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on State Government, Tribal Relations & Elections (originally sponsored by Senators Zeiger, Hunt, Bailey and Hawkins).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

State Government & Tribal Relations: 3/27/19, 4/2/19 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 4/9/19, 96-0.

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Requires Serve Washington to study volunteer opportunities within state government and report to the Legislature on its findings by July 1, 2020.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT & TRIBAL RELATIONS

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 9 members: Representatives Gregerson, Chair; Pellicciotti, Vice Chair; Walsh, Ranking Minority Member; Goehner, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Appleton, Dolan, Hudgins, Mosbrucker and Smith.

Staff: Desiree Omli (786-7105).

Background:

The federal National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993 required the Governor of each state to establish a state commission on service in order to be eligible for federal support of national service efforts. In 1994 the Washington Commission for National and Community Service was created by Executive Order 94-03 to:

- comply with federal requirements under the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993;

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- seek additional sources of non-federal funds, especially private funds, to meet matching requirements and build upon existing service initiatives;
- provide recommendations to the Governor pertaining to legislative or policy initiatives that promote the ethic of service;
- identify existing and new policies or practices that lead to the expansion of national service opportunities in Washington and support federal programs and efforts that expand national service; and
- provide the leadership and vision, alongside local volunteer organizations, civic and community groups, and units of government, to make service a part of the lives of all Washingtonians.

In 2014 the Washington Commission for National and Community Service was renamed Serve Washington. A commission of 20 members was appointed by the Governor for three-year terms to advise Serve Washington. The Commission members function as Ambassadors of Service within their sector and in their local communities to promote service opportunities to encourage volunteerism by all Washingtonians. The Office of Financial Management (OFM) administers federal grants and provides state resources for the staffing and support of Serve Washington. The Director of the OFM appoints the Executive Director of Serve Washington.

Summary of Bill:

Serve Washington must conduct a study to review volunteer opportunities within the following areas of state government:

- the Parks and Recreation Commission;
- the Department of Fish and Wildlife;
- the Military Department;
- the Office of the Insurance Commissioner;
- state mental hospital programs;
- state developmental disability programs; and
- state litter clean-up programs.

The study must:

- evaluate volunteer utilization;
- provide the costs and benefits of volunteer programs;
- identify any barriers to volunteerism and make recommendations for ways to remove those barriers;
- provide recommendations for how the state can support agencies in growing volunteer programs that will supplement, rather than replace or reduce, staff or services;
- identify any additional programs that could accommodate volunteers in the future; and
- recommend methods for strengthening connections between state agency volunteer programs and the state's volunteer infrastructure to support volunteer recruitment, volunteer engagement, and volunteer program training needs to improve program outcomes.

Serve Washington must submit a report of its findings to the Legislature by July 1, 2020.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) A 2019 Gallop survey showed that 57 percent of survey respondents reported not having faith in the government; this is a higher percentage than that which was reported during Watergate. Volunteering with government provides an opportunity to improve public trust in the government. Volunteering with government can help show the public what the government actually does, how it relates with the public, and how it handles various issues. One volunteer opportunity may lead to someone finding their interest and that could open the door to opportunities for the future.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Allison Spector.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.