

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5013

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
State Government, Tribal Relations & Elections, January 30, 2019

Title: An act relating to the appointment of religious coordinators.

Brief Description: Concerning the appointment of religious coordinators.

Sponsors: Senators McCoy, Hunt, Saldaña and Kuderer.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: State Government, Tribal Relations & Elections: 1/23/19, 1/30/19
[DP, w/oRec].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Changes the employee title chaplain to religious coordinator at Department of Corrections institutions.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT, TRIBAL RELATIONS & ELECTIONS

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Hunt, Chair; Kuderer, Vice Chair; Zeiger, Ranking Member; Hasegawa, Hawkins and Takko.

Minority Report: That it be referred without recommendation.

Signed by Senator Bailey.

Staff: Jarrett Sacks (786-7448)

Background: The Department of Corrections (DOC) appoints chaplains for its correctional institutions to meet the religious needs of inmates. Chaplains serve as religious program coordinators for all faith groups. Every chaplain must have qualifications consistent with community standards of the faith group to which the chaplain belongs.

Until July 1, 2019, the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) appoints chaplains for its juvenile, custodial, correctional, and mental institutions. After July 1, 2019, the

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Department of Children, Youth, and Families will appoint chaplains for juvenile correctional institutions, while DSHS will continue to appoint chaplains for its other institutions.

A minister or other clergyperson employed as a chaplain in a state institution or agency may receive, in addition to their gross salary, a housing allowance up to 40 percent of the person's gross salary as either of:

- the rental value of a home furnished to the person; or
- a housing allowance paid to the person as part of their compensation, in an amount equal to the rent or expense of the home.

Summary of Bill: The employee title chaplain is changed to religious coordinator for DOC institutions. The housing allowance for chaplains is expanded to include religious coordinators.

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: The term chaplain has a Christian connotation since other religions do not have chaplains, so it does not feel inclusive of non-Christians at the institutions. The chaplains do mostly administrative and coordination work, so the term religious coordinator fits better. Expanding the term will also allow for more diverse recruitment of individuals to serve as religious coordinators.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator John McCoy, Prime Sponsor; Margie Hutchinson, Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation; Gabriel Galanda, Chairman, Huy; Claudia Kauffman, citizen.

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