H-1762.2

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**HOUSE BILL 1802**

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**State of Washington 67th Legislature 2022 Regular Session**

**By** Representatives Pollet, Frame, Wicks, Paul, Bateman, Callan, Davis, Goodman, Leavitt, Taylor, Macri, Peterson, Ramel, Ryu, Orwall, Wylie, Simmons, Valdez, Walen, Dolan, Stonier, Ortiz-Self, Riccelli, Harris-Talley, and Kloba

AN ACT Relating to increasing access and representation in policy-making processes for individuals with disabilities; adding new sections to chapter 44.04 RCW; and creating new sections.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  (1) The legislature recognizes that people with disabilities are often left out of the policy decisions that affect them most. People with disabilities have lived experience navigating societal barriers and are therefore best equipped to find solutions. According to the centers for disease control and prevention, one in five Washingtonians have a disability; approximately 22 percent of the state population. The disability community is the one minority group that individuals can join at any point in their life and has been described by the United States department of labor as the largest minority group in the country. As such, the disability community is extremely diverse and made up of people with many different identities and experiences. People with disabilities face greater hardships finding and maintaining employment that pays a living wage, attaining higher education, and finding places to live. The poverty rate for people with disabilities in Washington is 20 percent, which is nearly twice the rate for people without disabilities. In addition, people with disabilities are employed at less than half the rate of people without disabilities despite the fact that with reasonable accommodations people with disabilities thrive in the workplace. As a result, many individuals rely on a fixed income and public benefits. Because people with disabilities make less money, and their income is often supplemented by the government, they may have trouble finding places to live. This causes many people with disabilities to rely on affordable housing solutions which are not always accessible. People with disabilities, particularly people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, fight negative stereotypes, stigma, and ableism every day in order to live dignified and autonomous lives. It is essential that people with disabilities have the opportunity to participate in and guide decision-making processes on policies and practices that impact their lives.

(2) The legislature finds people with disabilities are almost entirely unrepresented in policy making yet are disproportionately impacted by government decisions. Access is an equity issue and by addressing barriers to participation for people with disabilities the greater public will also benefit. A governing body that makes decisions about disability cannot do so effectively without the participation and contribution of those who have lived experience with disabilities.

(3) Therefore, the legislature intends to ensure meaningful participation from people with disabilities on each statutorily created or mandated task force, work group, advisory committee, or other entity tasked with examining policies or issues affecting people with disabilities. When people with disabilities have a seat at the table, Washington thrives.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 44.04 RCW to read as follows:

(1) The membership of any statutory entity, as defined in subsection (4) of this section, must meet the following requirements:

(a) At least three of the statutory entity's members or 30 percent of the statutory entity's membership, whichever is higher, must be people with disabilities who have direct lived experience with the identified issue being addressed by the statutory entity; and

(b) The membership of the entity must reflect the diversity of people with lived experience with disabilities, including members from different parts of the state with differing cultural and economic circumstances as well as the combination of these identities and experiences.

(2) The requirement in subsection (1)(a) of this section must include participation by people with intellectual and developmental disabilities when the issues being addressed directly and tangibly relate to services or conditions relating to this population.

(3) The statute law committee shall include in any published bill drafting guide reference to the requirements in subsection (1) of this section.

(4) As used in this section, "statutory entity" means any statutorily created or statutorily mandated task force, work group, advisory committee, or other entity created in or mandated by statute, the membership of which includes nonlegislative members and that is tasked with examining policies and issues related directly and tangibly to people with disabilities. "Statutory entity" does not include legislative select committees or other statutorily created legislative entities composed of only legislative members.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 44.04 RCW to read as follows:

(1) The chief clerk of the house of representatives and the secretary of the senate shall, in consultation with the governor's committee on disability issues and employment, the Washington state developmental disabilities council, and the office of equity, hold forums and identify:

(a) Barriers to access and meaningful participation by people with disabilities in stakeholder engagement conducted by members of the legislature and legislative standing committees;

(b) Tools to support access and meaningful participation in stakeholder engagement for people with disabilities; and

(c) Accommodations and modifications to stakeholder engagement processes which promote an increase in access and opportunities for participation in policy-making processes for individuals with disabilities, and that are consistent with the Americans with disabilities act, chapter 49.60 RCW, and principles of universal design and access.

(2) By December 1, 2022, and in compliance with RCW 43.01.036, the chief clerk of the house of representatives and the secretary of the senate shall submit a report to the legislature and legislative staff that details its findings under subsection (1) of this section.

(3) The chief clerk of the house of representatives and the secretary of the senate shall ensure that any relevant training material or guidance that is provided to members of the legislature or legislative staff:

(a) Describes the requirements in section 2 of this act;

(b) Strongly encourages the inclusion of people with disabilities as participants and subject matter experts in committee work sessions on the topic of disabilities;

(c) Includes best practices for providing barrier-free access to the legislature and the types of accommodations that are available to ensure that people with disabilities have full access to public meetings and other public legislative events; and

(d) In consultation with the governor's committee on disability issues and employment, the Washington state developmental disabilities council, and the office of equity, includes recommendations, if any, based on the forums held pursuant to subsection (1) of this section.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  This act may be known and cited as the nothing about us without us act.

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