

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## SB 5607

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**As Reported by House Committee On:**  
Housing, Human Services & Veterans

**Title:** An act relating to including individuals in jails and hospitals who were homeless before entering such facilities in the state's annual homeless census.

**Brief Description:** Including individuals in jails and hospitals who were homeless before entering such facilities in the state's annual homeless census.

**Sponsors:** Senators Wilson, L., Braun, Hasegawa, Rolfes, Wellman and Wilson, J..

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:**

Housing, Human Services & Veterans: 2/17/22, 2/22/22 [DP].

**Brief Summary of Bill**

- Requires the state's annual homeless census to include individuals in jails or hospitals who were homeless before entering such facilities.

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### HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HOUSING, HUMAN SERVICES & VETERANS

**Majority Report:** Do pass. Signed by 9 members: Representatives Peterson, Chair; Taylor, Vice Chair; Gilday, Ranking Minority Member; Barkis, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Bateman, Chopp, Donaghy, Jacobsen and Leavitt.

**Staff:** Serena Dolly (786-7150).

**Background:**

The Department of Commerce (Commerce) must annually conduct a homeless census that counts all homeless individuals in coordination with existing homeless census projects, including those funded by the United States Department of Housing and Urban

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*This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.*

Development (HUD). Every year HUD requires communities across the nation to collect and report data on their homeless populations. The data collection process is referred to as the Point-In-Time (PIT) count and is collected to estimate the number of sheltered and unsheltered homeless individuals in the United States. Commerce provides survey forms for counties and agencies to use for their PIT counts, but counties can opt to use their own forms if they comply with state guidelines. Any data on subpopulations and other characteristics of the homeless must be consistent with HUD requirements.

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**Summary of Bill:**

The state's annual homeless census must make every effort to count individuals who are admitted into hospitals or incarcerated in local jails and had no permanent address before entering such facilities. Any data or information collected during the annual homeless census about individuals who are admitted into hospitals or incarcerated in local jails and had no permanent address before entering such facilities is not required to be reported to HUD.

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**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) The state continues to face an increasing number of people experiencing homelessness. The PIT count completed in 2020 did not include people who were in jail or in a hospital. The state needs an accurate count to determine what resources are needed.

(Opposed) None.

(Other) Commerce coordinates the annual PIT count. The count is used as a way to communicate about homelessness, and most local jurisdictions understand there are shortfalls in the count. Commerce compares different sources of state data to try to get a more accurate number. The count is still a snapshot but represents the best estimate available.

**Persons Testifying:** (In support) Senator Lynda Wilson, prime sponsor.

(Other) Dave Pringle, Department of Commerce.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:** None.