
SENATE BILL 5793

State of Washington

67th Legislature

2022 Regular Session

By Senators C. Wilson, Trudeau, Das, Dhingra, Hasegawa, Lovelett, Nguyen, Nobles, and Saldaña; by request of Attorney General

Read first time 01/11/22. Referred to Committee on State Government & Elections.

1 AN ACT Relating to stipends for low-income or underrepresented
2 community members of state boards, commissions, councils, committees,
3 and other similar groups; adding a new section to chapter 43.03 RCW;
4 and creating a new section.

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

6 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that equitable
7 public policy discussions should include individuals directly
8 impacted by that policy. In order to do so, the legislature supports
9 removing barriers to that participation. The legislature finds that
10 asking community members with lower financial means to volunteer
11 their time and expertise while state employees and representatives of
12 advocacy organizations receive compensation from their respective
13 agency or organization for their time and experience ultimately
14 hinders full and open public participation. As a result, the
15 legislature finds that removing financial barriers for those
16 individuals fosters increased access to government and enriches
17 public policy discussions and decisions, ultimately leading to more
18 equitable and sustainable policy outcomes.

19 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 43.03
20 RCW to read as follows:

1 (1) Except as otherwise provided in this section, any member of a
2 group formed by a state office, agency, board, commission, or other
3 similar entity is eligible to receive stipends for their
4 participation, provided the member is:

5 (a) Low income; or

6 (b) Part of an underrepresented demographic that will be directly
7 or disproportionately impacted by decisions made by the group.

8 (2) Regardless of eligibility, members shall not receive stipends
9 if they are employed by a federal, state, or local government agency
10 and otherwise receiving compensation from such government for their
11 participation as a member of the group that day.

12 (3) Agencies, boards, commissions, and other similar groups
13 retain discretion over whether to provide stipends to group members
14 as well as to determine the amount of the stipend as provided by this
15 section. Nothing in this section requires groups to provide stipends.

16 (4) Stipends shall not exceed \$200 for each day during which the
17 member attends an official meeting or performs statutorily prescribed
18 duties approved by the chairperson of the group.

19 (5) Individuals eligible for stipends under this section are
20 eligible for reasonable allowances for child and adult care
21 reimbursement, lodging, and travel expenses as provided in RCW
22 43.03.050 and 43.03.060 in addition to stipend amounts.

23 (6) Nothing in this section creates an employment relationship,
24 or any membership or qualification in any state or other publicly
25 supported retirement system, for this or any other title due to the
26 payment of a stipend, lodging and travel expenses, or child care
27 expenses provided under this section where such a relationship,
28 membership, or qualification did not already exist.

29 (7) Agencies, boards, commissions, and other similar groups shall
30 take reasonable measures to ensure that the process of seeking and
31 securing stipends is made accessible to eligible members of groups.

32 (8) An agency may provide a stipend to individuals with lived
33 experience who are not otherwise compensated for their attendance at
34 meetings to support their participation in class one groups when the
35 agency determines such participation is desirable in order to
36 implement principles of equity as described in RCW 43.06D.020.

37 (9) Stipends and reimbursements do not count as income or assets
38 when calculating an individual's eligibility for state benefits.

39 (10) The office of financial management must establish model
40 policies to assist in carrying out the purposes of RCW 43.03.220,

1 43.03.230, 43.03.240, 43.03.250, and 43.03.265, and reimbursement of
2 other expenses authorized under this chapter for members of groups
3 described in RCW 43.03.220 including regulation of compensation or
4 stipends and the conditions under which stipends and reimbursements
5 shall be paid, so as to improve efficiency and to ensure proper use
6 and accountability of compensation strictly in the public interest
7 and for public purposes only.

8 (11) The office of financial management must convene a work group
9 of state agencies to provide feedback and recommendations for the
10 model policies under subsection (10) of this section. The work group
11 expires July 1, 2023.

12 (12) For the purposes of this section:

13 (a) "Low-income" means an individual whose income is not more
14 than 400 percent of the federal poverty level, adjusted for family
15 size.

16 (b) "Group" means a board, commission, council, committee, or
17 other similar group.

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