
HOUSE BILL 1566

State of Washington

67th Legislature

2021 Regular Session

By Representatives Pollet and Frame

1 AN ACT Relating to access and representation for individuals with
2 disabilities in the legislative process; adding new sections to
3 chapter 44.04 RCW; and creating new sections.

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

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** This act shall be known and cited as the
6 nothing about us without us act.

7 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** (1) The legislature recognizes that people
8 with disabilities are often left out of the policy decisions that
9 affect them most. Disabled people have lived experience navigating
10 societal barriers and are therefore best equipped to find solutions
11 through these barriers. According to the department of social and
12 health services, approximately 13 percent of state residents live
13 with a disability. People with disabilities face greater hardships
14 finding and maintaining employment that pays a living wage, attaining
15 higher education, and finding places to live. The poverty rate for
16 disabled people in Washington is 20 percent, which is nearly twice
17 the rate for people without disabilities. In addition, people with
18 disabilities are employed at less than half the rate of people
19 without disabilities. Because disabled people make less money, and
20 their income is often supplemented by the government, they may have

1 trouble finding places to live. Additionally, affordable housing is
2 not always accessible housing. People with disabilities know these
3 struggles firsthand, so it is essential that they have the
4 opportunity to participate in and guide decision-making processes.

5 (2) The legislature finds people with disabilities are almost
6 entirely unrepresented in policy making. A governing body that makes
7 decisions about disability, cannot do so effectively without the
8 voices of that group present.

9 (3) Therefore, the legislature intends to ensure meaningful
10 participation from disabled people on each task force, select
11 committee, work group, advisory committee, or other statutory entity
12 that makes decisions affecting disabled people. When people with
13 disabilities have a seat at the table, Washington thrives.

14 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** A new section is added to chapter 44.04
15 RCW to read as follows:

16 (1) The membership of any task force, select committee, work
17 group, advisory committee, or other statutory entity whose activities
18 are related to issues directly involving individuals with
19 disabilities must reflect the diversity of people with lived
20 experience with disabilities, including members with differing
21 cultural and economic circumstances.

22 (2) Membership must consist of at least three people with
23 disabilities who have experience with the identified issue being
24 addressed by the group. This requirement includes participation by
25 three people with intellectual and developmental disabilities when
26 the issues being addressed directly relate to services or conditions
27 relating to such persons.

28 (3) No members are required to be added to an entity so long as
29 its membership is in compliance with subsection (1) of this section.

30 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** A new section is added to chapter 44.04
31 RCW to read as follows:

32 The chief clerk of the house of representatives and the secretary
33 of the senate must:

34 (1) Consult with the governor's committee on disability issues
35 and employment, the developmental disabilities council, and the state
36 office of equity to identify:

1 (a) Common barriers to access and to meaningful participation in
2 stakeholder engagement conducted by members of the legislature and
3 legislative standing committees; and
4 (b) Accommodations and modifications to stakeholder engagement
5 processes that are consistent with the Americans with disabilities
6 act, chapter 49.60 RCW, and principles of universal design and
7 access;
8 (2) Present findings under subsection (1)(a) of this section to
9 members of the legislature and to legislative staff by December 1,
10 2021; and
11 (3) Ensure that any relevant training material or guidance that
12 is provided to members of the legislature or to legislative staff:
13 (a) Describes the requirements in section 3 of this act;
14 (b) Strongly encourages the inclusion of individuals with
15 disabilities as participants and subject matter experts in committee
16 work sessions on the topic of disabilities;
17 (c) Includes information about providing barrier-free access and
18 the types of accommodations that are available to ensure that
19 individuals with disabilities have full access to public meetings and
20 other public legislative events; and
21 (d) Includes the recommendations provided by the governor's
22 committee on disability issues and employment, the developmental
23 disabilities council, and the state office of equity solicited under
24 subsection (1) of this section.

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