

ASSEMBLY BILL

No. 1167

Introduced by Assembly Member Fong

February 18, 2011

An act to add Chapter 7 (commencing with Section 8260) to Division 8 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, relating to homelessness.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 1167, as introduced, Fong. Homelessness: Interagency Council on Homelessness.

Under existing law, several agencies have prescribed responsibilities relating to homeless persons.

This bill would create the California Interagency Council on Homelessness. This bill would provide that the council be composed of specified members and would require the council to perform various duties, including providing a state plan to end homelessness, updated every 2 years. This bill would require the council to seek all available federal funding for purposes of funding the council and its activities.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: yes.
State-mandated local program: no.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

- 1 SECTION 1. The Legislature finds and declares all of the
- 2 following:
- 3 (a) California has the highest rate of homelessness and the
- 4 highest ratio of homeless people per resident, with 360,000 people
- 5 sleeping on the streets or in shelters on any given night.

- 1 (b) Homelessness is traumatic for those who suffer it, often
2 leading to separated families, exacerbation of health conditions, a
3 rise in avoidable emergency room use, social and academic delays
4 among children, and greater likelihood of incarceration.
- 5 (c) Many people who lack permanent shelter and the ability to
6 access regular support ricochet through separate and expensive
7 public systems: overburdened corrections systems, overcrowded
8 hospital emergency rooms, mental health programs, substance
9 abuse treatment and detox facilities, shelters, and emergency
10 housing. As a result, people experiencing chronic homelessness
11 use a disproportionate share of state and local services.
- 12 (d) Innovative approaches across the nation and within
13 California show promise for reducing homelessness and the
14 resulting impact on state services.
- 15 (e) Changing the system and reducing homelessness requires
16 coordination and cooperation among federal, state, and local
17 governments, as well as private sector organizations.
- 18 (f) Creation of a statewide coordinating council is an important
19 and effective tool in supporting initiatives to end homelessness in
20 California.
- 21 (g) Creation of a statewide coordinating council will stem
22 avoidable costs of maintaining the number of homeless persons
23 and will, therefore, result in reducing avoidable costs to multiple
24 programs.
- 25 (h) Homelessness affects multiple systems in California at a
26 very high public cost, including housing, mental health and
27 substance abuse, education, corrections, foster care, health care,
28 and veterans services. Reducing homelessness would produce cost
29 savings for all these systems. The state adopted a Ten-Year Chronic
30 Homelessness Action Plan in February 2010, but has no mechanism
31 in place to assess progress or hold state agencies accountable to
32 the action steps in the plan. A codified, structured interagency
33 council on homelessness would help fill this gap.
- 34 (i) In November 2005, Governor Schwarzenegger created the
35 Governor’s Chronic Homelessness Initiative, which included plans
36 to form an interagency coordinating council to reduce
37 homelessness. The Business, Transportation and Housing Agency’s
38 2005–10 Consolidated Plan further indicates the importance of an
39 interagency council on homelessness. Despite these intentions, a

1 council has not met regularly or publicly since the Governor
2 adopted his Chronic Homelessness Initiative.

3 (j) California must give priority to developing consolidated,
4 coordinated, and cooperative approaches to issues of homelessness,
5 including, but not limited to, specific issues addressing homeless
6 youth, families, veterans, parolees, victims of domestic violence,
7 people with substance abuse or other mental health disorders,
8 people experiencing chronic homelessness, seniors, and disabled
9 people.

10 (k) Working within current costs, a revitalized Interagency
11 Council on Homelessness will reduce duplication of efforts and
12 the costs of homelessness and will redirect resources to more
13 effective approaches, developing a more integrated system and
14 eliminating fragmentation. Other states have created interagency
15 councils without initial investment of resources.

16 (l) California is not accessing all of the federal funds for
17 homelessness that it should due to a lack of coordination among
18 some agencies. For example, 30 other states apply for funds
19 through the federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act
20 programs. Application for these funds could total millions of
21 dollars, and requires state agency collaboration.

22 SEC. 2. Chapter 7 (commencing with Section 8260) is added
23 to Division 8 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, to read:

24

25 CHAPTER 7. CALIFORNIA INTERAGENCY COUNCIL ON
26 HOMELESSNESS

27

28 8260. For purposes of this chapter, the following definitions
29 shall apply:

30 (a) "Council" means the California Interagency Council on
31 Homelessness.

32 (b) "Stakeholder organization" means a nonprofit or faith-based
33 organization whose primary mission is to prevent or end
34 homelessness, to provide services or health care to people who are
35 homeless, or to create housing for people who are homeless.

36 8261. (a) There is hereby created in state government the
37 California Interagency Council on Homelessness with a mission
38 to construct cross-agency and community cooperation in
39 responding to homelessness, and to identify and apply for increased
40 federal funding to respond to homelessness.

1 (b) The Governor shall designate a lead agency or representative
2 from the Governor’s staff to direct the work of the council.
3 (c) The council shall seek all available federal funding,
4 including, but not limited to, grant and technical assistance funds
5 under the federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42
6 U.S.C. Sec. 11301 et seq.), for purposes of funding the council
7 and its activities.
8 (d) Membership of the council shall include all of the following:
9 (1) At least one representative with decisionmaking authority
10 from each of the following:
11 (A) The Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation.
12 (B) The Department of Housing and Community Development.
13 (C) The State Department of Mental Health.
14 (D) The State Department of Social Services.
15 (E) The Department of Veterans Affairs.
16 (2) Two representatives among local law enforcement, county
17 or city government, or organizations representing these interests.
18 One representative appointed by the Senate Committee on Rules,
19 and one representative appointed by the Speaker of the Assembly.
20 (3) Representatives of two stakeholder organizations, with one
21 to be appointed by the Speaker of the Assembly and the other to
22 be appointed by the Senate Committee on Rules.
23 (4) Two people who have experienced homelessness, with one
24 to be appointed by the Speaker of the Assembly and the other to
25 be appointed by the Senate Committee on Rules.
26 (e) The council may, at its discretion, invite stakeholders, people
27 who have experienced homelessness, members of philanthropic
28 communities, and experts to participate in meetings or provide
29 information to the council.
30 (f) The Governor shall appoint a chairperson and vice
31 chairperson from among the members of the council. Within
32 current costs, the council may establish working groups, task
33 forces, or other structures from within its membership or with
34 outside members to assist it in its work. Working groups, task
35 forces, or other structures established by the council shall determine
36 their own meeting schedules.
37 (g) Members of the council shall serve without compensation,
38 except that consumer representatives shall receive minimal
39 compensation if private funds are available. State funds shall not
40 be used to compensate members of the council.

1 8262. (a) The council shall do all of the following:

2 (1) Hold public meetings at least once every quarter.

3 (2) Provide a state plan to end homelessness, updated every two
4 years, and submit this plan to the Speaker of the Assembly and
5 the Senate Committee on Rules.

6 (b) The council may, but is not required to, do all of the
7 following:

8 (1) Act as the lead for coordinating and planning the state's
9 response to homelessness if necessary as a requirement to apply
10 for federal funding sources.

11 (2) Discuss potential mechanisms for streamlining the
12 administration of programs across agencies and jurisdictions to
13 reduce duplication, consolidate availability of services, and ease
14 clients' access to services.

15 (3) Discuss potential mechanisms for streamlining funding of
16 homelessness programs to leverage existing resources more
17 effectively.

18 (4) Solicit input and suggestions from stakeholders, the business
19 community, the concerned public, and other governmental agencies
20 on the most effective strategies to address homelessness.

21 (5) Identify best practices from other states in combating
22 homelessness.

23 (6) Identify private and public funding partnerships.

24 (c) The council may engage or accept the services of agency
25 personnel, contract with nonprofit organizations, or employ council
26 staff to operate, manage, or conduct the business of the council,
27 only if these services are provided by private, philanthropic, or
28 other nonstate funding resources available for that purpose or the
29 Legislature makes a future appropriation for that purpose.

30 8263. Except as otherwise provided in this chapter, the council
31 shall operate within the current budget of each department and
32 agency represented. Each department and agency shall cooperate
33 with the council and furnish it with information and assistance that
34 is necessary or useful to further the purposes of this chapter.