

Legislation Text

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Clerk 11/03/2016

A RESOLUTION calling on the Washington state legislature to recognize that public health is essential and to provide the critical down payment to support core services in all communities and allow public health to rebuild its statewide system with added efficiency.

WHEREAS, the public health system in Washington provides the foundation for the larger health-care framework, working to prevent illness and disease while supporting the work of community partners, and

WHEREAS, tracking, responding to, and preventing costly food and water contamination and disease outbreaks is essential to protecting the public's health, and

WHEREAS, state and local public health officials, together with local leaders, have identified an agreed upon set of core public health services that should be available for every Washingtonian, and

WHEREAS, after a century of increasing life expectancies, today these gains are threatened by new and more complex diseases, continued tobacco use and preventable chronic diseases, putting today's children at risk of becoming the first generation to have shorter life expectancies than its parents, and

WHEREAS, the public's well-being is also threatened by public health's inability to meet its basic responsibility to provide these core services due to changes in its funding structure, complex and new diseases, and growing populations; and

WHEREAS, the motor vehicle excise tax was repealed in 2000, leaving the public health system without an adequate and sustainable funding source, and

WHEREAS, Washington state's population has grown by more than one million residents since 2000,

and is expected to grow by another two million residents by 2025, and

WHEREAS, Washington state spends less on public health protection, at \$38.08 per person, than other states such as Idaho, at \$54.35 per person, and Wyoming, at \$89.75 per person, and

WHEREAS, it now takes Public Health - Seattle & King County forty percent longer to investigate, and stop, outbreaks of foodborne illness, such as E. Coli, due to growing complexity of the diseases and cuts to the program, and

WHEREAS, Public Health - Seattle & King County cannot prevent disease outbreaks in hospitals because it does not have the necessary resources, and

WHEREAS, Public Health - Seattle & King County no longer has the resources needed to identify and track latent cases of tuberculosis, despite having an estimated one hundred thousand people in the county with latent tuberculosis, and

WHEREAS, over the last four years, state and local public health leaders have developed a plan to modernize the state's public health system, ensuring core services are available everywhere and designating others that can be effectively and efficiently shared between health departments, and

WHEREAS, without securing ongoing, stable, and dedicated funding for core public health services, our communities are left unprepared for emergencies, such as the State Route 530 slide, and vulnerable to the spread of communicable diseases, such as Zika and whooping cough, and

WHEREAS, rebuilding and refocusing our public health services means we can better monitor and coordinate emergency responses, by keeping our families and communities safe, reducing costs for taxpayers and protecting our local economy;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Health of King County:

The Board of Health calls on the Washington state Legislature to recognize that public health is essential and provide the critical down payment to support core services in all communities and allow public health to rebuild its statewide system with added efficiency.