



Legislation Text

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Clerk 12/01/2010

A MOTION relating to creation of the priority commission to advise on funding King County's criminal justice system.

WHEREAS, public safety is the most fundamental purpose of government, and

WHEREAS, a strong system of criminal justice is necessary to maintain public safety and provide safe and livable communities, and

WHEREAS, under Washington state law, counties provide many regional and local criminal justice functions, including police protection and superior and district court functions as well as maintaining a jail and responding to emergencies, and

WHEREAS, the King County general fund has struggled to maintain these services due to state limits on revenue, unfunded mandates and increases in costs related to maintaining criminal justice services, and

WHEREAS, to balance the 2011 budget, the county was forced to cut sixty million dollars in essential programs including local criminal justice services such as property crime investigations, school resource officers and storefront offices and regional criminal justice functions such as court ordered probation, and

WHEREAS, King County's general fund faces a projected twenty-five-million-dollar deficit in 2012 that will require further cuts to the criminal justice system, and

WHEREAS, King County has created dedicated revenue sources for such functions as parks maintenance, parks expansion, open space acquisition, human services, mental illness, passenger only ferry service, flood control and automated fingerprint identification without creating a dependable source of revenue for the criminal justice system, and

WHEREAS, the voters rejected a two tenths of one percent sales tax dedicated to the criminal justice system and the King County Youth Services Center;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT MOVED by the Council of King County:

A. The executive shall convene the priority commission by February 28, 2011, that is charged with:

1. Exploring the existing state of King County's criminal justice system for funding deficiencies that limit the county's ability to maintain public safety;
2. Examining criminal justice agency budgets for savings and efficiencies;
3. Developing a policy framework on the minimum level of criminal justice service required to maintain public safety and provide safe and livable communities;
4. Making recommendations for funding the criminal justice system in the future including but not limited to a tax neutral plan that could be submitted to voters at the 2011 general election; and
5. Preparing a report containing the commission's findings that shall be transmitted to the council, along with any accompanying legislation to implement findings, by May 30, 2011.

B. The commission shall be made up of representatives of each of the following organizations or agencies:

1. Sheriff's office;
2. Prosecuting attorney's office;
3. Superior court;
4. District court;
5. Office of public defense;
6. Department of adult and juvenile detention;
7. One representative of a domestic violence service organization;
8. One representative of a sexual assault service organization; and
9. One representative of an environmental organization.