



## Legislation Text

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**File #:** 2019-0423, **Version:** 1

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Clerk 10/16/2019

A MOTION requesting the executive to implement a pilot program to assist low-income tenants who are displaced by rent increases in unincorporated King County and to provide an annual evaluation of the program to the King County council.

WHEREAS, a 2019 report by Policy Link and the Center for Popular Democracy states that America is increasingly a renter nation, with a renter majority in its one hundred largest cities, and

WHEREAS, that same report states that today, a full-time minimum-wage worker cannot afford a one-bedroom apartment in ninety-nine percent of counties, about six thousand three hundred people are evicted every day and, in 2016, 1.3 million public schoolchildren were homeless, which is nearly double the number from 2007, and

WHEREAS, Seattle Municipal Code chapter 22.210, which includes the city of Seattle's Tenant Relocation Assistance Ordinance, Ordinance 115141, which was passed in 1990, requires landlords to pay relocation money to low-income Seattle tenants who are displaced from their units, and

WHEREAS, the fourth recommendation of the regional affordable housing task force's 2018 five-year action plan includes the recommendation to preserve access to affordable homes for renters by supporting tenant protections to increase housing stability and reduce risk of homelessness, and

WHEREAS, the regional affordable housing task force 2018 five-year action plan also states that communities of color and renters are disproportionately likely to be severely cost burdened, paying more than half of their income toward housing costs, and renters are more likely than home owners to be severely cost

burdened;

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

A. The council requests that the executive develop and implement a pilot program to assist low-income tenants, as defined by RCW 59.18.440, who are displaced by rent increases in unincorporated King County. As part of this pilot program, the executive shall:

1. Identify a source of funding for relocation assistance that may include, but not be limited to, already -existing resources, external funders and landlords. In considering funding sources, the executive shall identify the appropriate ratio between King County and landlords in shouldering the payment for relocation assistance to tenants;

2. Develop a five-year pilot program that should:

- a. include a relocation assistance program for displaced low-income tenants;
- b. include up to three months of rent to be paid to the dislocated tenant;
- c. limit the program to tenants who make less than fifty percent of area median income;
- d. limit tenants to thirty days to apply for relocation assistance;
- e. require that a landlord provide ninety days' notice to tenants before a rent increase; and
- f. be limited to the following reasons for rental increases, in accordance with RCW 59.18.440:

housing demolition; substantial rehabilitation; change of use or removal of restrictions placed on subsidized housing; and, outside of state law requirements, property tax increases given as a reason for rental increases;

3. Determine other necessary outreach and communication requirements for the program by consulting with a wide array of stakeholders;

4. Work with the department of local services and the department of community and human services to ensure that investigation, complaints and applications for assistance are routed through the appropriate processes and with adequate assistance; and

5. Develop a proposal for a tenant relocation licensing program similar to that of the city of Seattle as

of the date of passage of this motion.

B. The council requests that the executive evaluate the pilot program and transmit an evaluation report to the council that includes the following information:

1. Identification of the pilot period during which the rental relocation assistance program was implemented;
2. Description of the processes used for identifying renters who have been impacted and additional outreach efforts to underserved communities, which shall include both renters and landlords;
3. Identification of the number of renters and landlords notified during the pilot period;
4. Description of any feedback from renters and stakeholders communities during the pilot period; and
5. Recommendations for long-term implementation of a renter relocation assistance program and evaluating the impact of such a program.

C. The King executive is requested to transmit evaluation progress report on the pilot program one year after the date of passage of this motion, and then annually for the duration of the pilot program. The report should be filed in the form of a paper original and an electronic copy with the clerk of the council, who shall retain the original and provide an electronic copy to all councilmembers, the council chief of staff and the lead staff to the health, housing and human services committee or its successor.