



Legislation Text

File #: 2021-0203, **Version:** 1

A MOTION requesting the executive to develop and implement a vaccine incentive program for King County residents who complete vaccination against coronavirus disease 2019.

WHEREAS, in response to the crisis posed by the coronavirus disease 2019 pandemic, the governor declared a state of emergency on February 29, 2020, directing state agencies to use all resources necessary to prepare for and respond to the outbreak, and

WHEREAS, on March 1, 2020, the executive issued a proclamation of emergency for King County, enabling extraordinary measures to respond to the coronavirus disease 2019 pandemic, and

WHEREAS, on March 3, 2020, the council passed Motion 15610, affirming the executive's proclamation of emergency, and

WHEREAS, on March 23, 2020, the governor issued a "Stay Home, Stay Healthy" order, which imposed significant limitations on business operations, as well as on social, spiritual, educational and recreational gatherings, and

WHEREAS, since the beginning of the pandemic, Washington state has experienced nearly four hundred twenty thousand cases of coronavirus disease 2019, more than twenty-three thousand hospitalizations and more than five thousand six hundred deaths from the disease, and

WHEREAS, on December 11, 2020, the United States Food and Drug Administration issued the first emergency use authorization for a vaccine for the prevention of coronavirus disease 2019, and

WHEREAS, effective April 15, 2021, all Washington residents age sixteen and older are eligible to receive a coronavirus disease 2019 vaccination, and

WHEREAS, on May 10, 2021, the United States Food and Drug Administration expanded the emergency use authorization for the Pfizer-BioNTech coronavirus disease 2019 vaccine to include adolescents twelve through fifteen years of age, and

WHEREAS, as of May 18, 2021, nearly seventy percent of King County residents twelve or older have received at least one dose of vaccine and fifty-four percent of residents are fully vaccinated, and

WHEREAS, public health officials believe that the risk of infection cannot be eliminated for fully vaccinated people and for those not eligible to be vaccinated if there is continued community transmission of the virus and have therefore urged all eligible people to become vaccinated, and

WHEREAS, the Washington state Department of Health and public health - Seattle & King County, in partnership with local jurisdictions, school districts, fire departments, hospitals, medical practices, pharmacies and community-based organizations have been working to ensure that vaccinations are easily available to all residents of King County, including to populations that have historically been underserved, those that may find it difficult to leave home to secure a vaccination, youth and young adults and those that may be hesitant to take the vaccine, and

WHEREAS, vaccine incentive programs have been implemented by jurisdictions in King County and around the country to encourage eligible residents to become vaccinated, thereby providing a public health and safety benefit by reducing the risk of continued community transmission of coronavirus disease 2019, and

WHEREAS, local jurisdictions including Seattle have partnered with local businesses to organize incentive programs for those who receive a vaccine for coronavirus disease 2019, including free food or beverages, gift cards or discounts from partnering local businesses, and

WHEREAS, the state of New York has announced a plan to offer free ticket vouchers to games of the New York Yankees or the New York Mets to residents who receive a vaccine for coronavirus disease 2019 at clinics located at Yankee Stadium or Citi Field, and

WHEREAS, the city of Chicago has launched the Protect Chicago Music Series, a monthly series of

musical events exclusively for residents of Chicago who have completed their vaccination for coronavirus disease 2019, and

WHEREAS, the city of Detroit has initiated a Good Neighbor Program that offers a fifty-dollar financial incentive per vaccine dose to people who register with the program and then provide transportation to other residents to scheduled appointments to receive the coronavirus disease 2019 vaccine, and

WHEREAS, the state of West Virginia is exploring the possibility of offering savings bonds for all West Virginia residents who have been vaccinated for coronavirus disease 2019, and

WHEREAS, the state of Maryland has announced a financial incentive program of one hundred dollars for state employees who receive a vaccine for coronavirus disease 2019, and

WHEREAS, the state of Ohio has implemented Ohio Vax-a-Million, a weekly drawing to be held on five successive weeks with a weekly prize of up to one million dollars for which only Ohio residents who have received a vaccine for coronavirus disease 2019 may qualify to win, and

WHEREAS, increasing the number of people who are fully vaccinated for coronavirus disease 2019 in King County will provide a public health and safety benefit by reducing the risk for all King County residents and allowing business operations, as well as social, spiritual, educational and recreational gatherings to return safely to normal, pre-pandemic capacity;

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

A. In recognition of the public health and safety benefit of increasing the number of people in King County who are vaccinated for coronavirus disease 2019, the council requests the executive develop and implement a vaccine incentive program. The executive is encouraged to explore various forms of incentives, including, but not limited to, vouchers for property tax or rent assistance, direct payments, vouchers or gift cards for goods or services and prize drawings.

B. The vaccine incentive program should be made available to every King County resident who can document a full vaccination course being completed after May 20, 2021.

C. The executive should transmit any necessary legislation to implement the vaccine incentive program to the council.

D. The executive should provide a verbal report on the progress of the vaccine incentive program to the committee of the whole no later than June 16, 2021.