



Legislation Text

File #: 2016-0419, **Version:** 2

Clerk 09/16/2016

A MOTION requesting the executive's response informing council deliberations regarding possible renewal of the veterans and human services levy.

WHEREAS, in November 2005, King County voters passed the first veterans and human services levy to generate funding for a wide range of programs to assist veterans, military personnel and their families and individuals and families in need, and

WHEREAS, in August 2011, voters in King County voted to renew the veterans and human services levy for another six years, and

WHEREAS, the goals of the existing veterans and human services levy are to reduce homelessness and emergency medical costs, to reduce criminal justice system involvement and to increase self-sufficiency by means of employment, and

WHEREAS, fifty percent of the existing levy's proceeds are allocated to provision of regional health and human services for veterans, military personnel and their families and fifty percent is allocated to provision of regional health and human services to a wide range of people in need of those services. The allocation has been beneficial in delivering services to populations in need of such services, and

WHEREAS, the veterans and human services levy will expire on December 31, 2017, and

WHEREAS, the veterans and human services levy is a voter-approved, six-year levy lid lift, renewal of which requires voter approval of a ballot measure, and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs estimates that King County remains home to more than one hundred and ten thousand veterans and military servicemembers, and

WHEREAS, All Home estimates that eight hundred sixty-seven veterans remain homeless in King County in 2016, and

WHEREAS, veterans, servicemembers, their families and other populations within King County have benefitted from services funded by the veterans and human services levy;

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

A. The King County council is considering whether to submit to the qualified electors for their approval in 2017 a ballot measure to renew the veterans and human services levy. The council requests that the executive submit for council review an assessment report of the veterans and human services levy-funded goals, strategies, services and programs. The assessment report submitted to the council shall be developed in consultation with stakeholders and shall include:

1. An assessment of the effectiveness of the of the veterans and human services levy-funded goals outlined in Ordinance 17236, and the effectiveness of the existing strategies, services and programs in meeting the three policy goals. The assessment report shall include an explanation of the methodology used to make the determination of effectiveness. The purpose of the review is to identify potential changes to improve the levy's effectiveness, improve the levy's stewardship of resources and improve the levy's equity and social justice impact;

2. Analysis and recommendations that address the following:

- a. whether the council should revise, eliminate, or retain the veterans and human services levy's three goals, enumerated in Ordinance 17236: to prevent and reduce homelessness; to reduce unnecessary criminal justice and emergency medical system involvement; and to increase self-sufficiency of veterans and vulnerable populations;

- b. whether a renewed levy should incorporate any new goals not specified in the current levy's service improvement plan;

- c. how a renewed levy would align and coordinate with the best starts for kids levy and the mental

illness and drug dependency sales tax, as well as other federal, state and local funding streams and programs, so as to integrate, align and avoid duplication of effort;

d. whether a renewed levy should retain some or all of the existing levy's four strategies, which are to: support veterans and their families to build stable lives and strong relationships; end homelessness through outreach, prevention, permanent supportive housing and employment; improve health through the integration of medical and behavioral health services; and strengthen families at risk;

e. whether a renewed levy should incorporate any new strategies not specified in the current levy's service improvement plan. The analysis and recommendations shall specifically address: whether a renewed levy should include a strategy or strategies to serve older adults; a strategy or strategies to increase integration of civil legal services for levy-funded programs or persons served by the levy; a strategy or strategies to increase investments in affordable housing generally and reduction of homelessness specifically; a strategy or strategies to enhance reentry services for criminal justice system-involved and incarcerated persons; strategy or strategies to tailor services for particular populations whose circumstances warrant specialized approaches, including sexually exploited youth, victims of human trafficking and low-income residents living in rural communities; and a strategy or strategies to provide investments in services for survivors of domestic violence and people experiencing domestic violence; and

f. whether a renewed levy should retain or revise the current levy's citizen oversight board structure; and

3. An assessment of the state of funding for basic human services throughout King County, sometimes referred to as the "social safety net," in light of changing priorities of public and private funders, specifically the move away from flexible funding based on community needs and toward targeted funding of specific causes. The report should include options and recommendations for use of proceeds from a renewed veterans and human services levy to fill gaps in the social safety net.

B. In addition to the report requested in section A. of this motion, the council requests that the

executive prepare and deliver an additional report at the same time as the assessment report requested herein, to assess the costs of providing housing, including shelter where and when needed, for every King County veteran in need of housing or shelter, such that no veteran residing in King County who seeks housing or shelter, shall remain unhoused. This additional report should also assess whether funding to support these costs should be assembled by re-allocating existing levy proceeds, or whether additional revenues should be raised, or a combination of both. The report should also provide a potential timeline to accomplish the goal of housing every veteran who seeks housing or shelter.

C. The executive shall file the veterans and human services levy assessment report and the additional report requested by this motion by January 19, 2017, 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, the policy staff director and the lead staff for the health, housing and human services committee and the regional policies committee, or their successors.