



Legislation Text

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Clerk 01/08/2020

A RESOLUTION encouraging the Washington state Legislature to support funding for foundational public health services.

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

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

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

WHEREAS, no state or local public health department should be without foundational public health components and programs which include communicable disease control, chronic disease and injury prevention, environmental public health, maternal, child and family health, and access to and linkage with clinical care; and

WHEREAS, after a century of increasing life expectancies, these gains are threatened by new and more complex diseases and emerging threats, putting today's children at risk of becoming the first generation to have shorter life expectancies than their parents, and

WHEREAS, public health's ability to address social and community conditions could improve health, life expectancy and quality of life, while also reducing related health care costs and productivity losses, and

WHEREAS, the public's well-being is also threatened by public health's inability to meet its basic responsibility to provide those foundational 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WHEREAS, the motor vehicle excise tax was repealed in 2000, leaving the public health system without an adequate and sustainable funding source, and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, the Washington state Legislature invested \$22 million for foundational public health services in the 2019-2021 biennium, and

WHEREAS, Public Health - Seattle & King County received nearly \$6 million of that investment, and

WHEREAS, due to that funding, Public Health - Seattle & King County: notified partners infected with sexually transmitted diseases; increased partnerships with health care systems to implement best practices that keep patients safe; and expanded communicable disease response;

WHEREAS, Public Health - Seattle & King County's estimated gap for fully funding Foundational Public Health Services is more than \$25 million, and

WHEREAS, the \$22 million relied on vapor tax revenue that are not being collected at the rate forecasted, and

WHEREAS, without securing ongoing, stable and dedicated funding for foundational public health services, our communities are vulnerable to the spread of healthcare-associated infections and other communicable diseases like hepatitis C, tuberculosis and sexually transmitted diseases, and

WHEREAS, investing in communities to improve the health and well-being of people could also revitalize and improve economic opportunity, enhancing prosperity in the community and for its residents and businesses;

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

The Board of Health calls on the Washington state Legislature to allocate sustainable and significant funding necessary to support foundational public health services in all communities and allow public health to continue rebuilding its statewide system with added efficiency.