

Testimony
House Bill 1315 - Department of Human Services
House Human Services Committee
Representative Robin Weisz, Chairman

January 16, 2019

Chairman Weisz and members of the House Human Services Committee, I am Tom Eide, Director of Field Services and Chief Financial Officer for the Department of Human Services (Department). I appear today to testify on House Bill 1315.

As a department, we have several concerns about what is requested and the potential for unrecognized fiscal impact. This bill makes specific requests of the Department which are not a typical part of our services.

In Section 1, it is requested that the Department will collaborate with the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation to establish and implement a new community transitional housing program to provide qualifying convicted felons with short-term housing following their release from the corrections system. It requests the two agencies establish eligibility criteria using tools such as Level of Service Inventory Revised (LSI-R) working with individuals on probation; establish criteria, certification and provide training for host homes; and develop program oversight, including guidelines, goals, liability protocols, and employment parameters for participants with specific employment and insurance requirements.

While the Department has recently partnered with Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation in regards to the Free Through Recovery program, that work was specific to community based behavioral health services and supports. Most of the specific activities in this bill would be outside of our current expertise and would have us working with a population that is not our traditional clients.

In addition, the requests above will require resources of both full-time equivalent positions and support costs of which none are included in this bill. Funding for

administering and creating such a program, along with providing certification and a system for payment, is not easily estimated without more details on program specifics and a full assessment from the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation on how this could be accomplished.

While the Department recognizes the importance of safe and stable housing for the vulnerable people it serves, and appreciates the desire to provide housing to a constituent group who would likely benefit, this particular bill is outside of the expertise of the Department and not sufficiently resourced to produce the desired outcomes.

This concludes my testimony and I am happy to answer any questions. Thank you.