



STATE OF WASHINGTON
— OFFICE OF GOVERNOR BOB FERGUSON —

May 20, 2025

To the Honorable President and Members,
The Senate of the State of Washington

Esteemed Colleagues:

I am returning herewith, without my approval as to Section 5, Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill No. 5232 entitled:

"AN ACT Relating to supporting economic security by updating provisions related to the home security fund and the essential needs and housing support program."

Section 5 of this bill expands eligibility for the Housing and Essential Needs Referral program faster than our state eligibility systems can keep pace. The policy of expanding access to this program is important, and I support the intent of this legislation. But, as the Legislature was made aware, it is not possible for the state agencies that would be responsible for implementing this policy to do so by the applicable deadline—or to do so in a way that ensures data privacy and transparency for beneficiaries on an accelerated timeline. Moreover, no funding was provided to these agencies to cover the significant costs of implementing this eligibility expansion. Therefore, I am vetoing Section 5. At the same time, I am directing the Department of Social and Health Services, the Department of Commerce, and the Health Care Authority to develop a plan to accomplish the eligibility expansion this bill contemplates, and to begin implementing this plan within a rapid and reasonable timeframe.

I want to thank the legislators who worked on this important bill. Their intentions are right and noble to bring these services to vulnerable Washingtonians. I look forward to partnering with the Legislature on a solution going forward.

For these reasons I have vetoed Section 5 of Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill No. 5232.

With the exception of Section 5, Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill No. 5232 is approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Bob Ferguson
Governor