

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1827

As Reported by House Committee On:
Community & Economic Development

Title: An act relating to the creation of the community reinvestment account and community reinvestment program.

Brief Description: Creating the community reinvestment account and community reinvestment program.

Sponsors: Representatives Morgan, Simmons, Ormsby, Harris-Talley and Kloba; by request of Office of the Governor.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Community & Economic Development: 1/19/22, 1/28/22 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Establishes the Community Reinvestment Account (Account) and allows the Department of Commerce to make expenditures from the Account for economic development, civil and criminal legal assistance, community-based violence intervention and prevention, reentry services, and 911 system support.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 9 members: Representatives Ryu, Chair; Paul, Vice Chair; Boehnke, Ranking Minority Member; Donaghy, Frame, Johnson, J., Rule, Sutherland and Taylor.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 2 members: Representatives Chase, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Kraft.

Minority Report: Without recommendation. Signed by 2 members: Representatives

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

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Staff: Cassie Jones (786-7303).

Background:

The stated mission of the Department of Commerce (Commerce) is to strengthen communities in Washington. The agency administers a portfolio of more than 100 programs and several state boards and commissions. Programs administered by Commerce address a wide range of issues including homelessness assistance, crime victims advocacy, public safety, rural communities, and community economic opportunities, among others.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

The Community Reinvestment Account (Account) is created in the State Treasury. Moneys in the Account may be spent only after appropriation. Expenditures from the Account may only be spent by Commerce for:

- economic development, which includes addressing wealth disparities to promote asset building such as home ownership and expanding access to financial resources including, but not limited to, grants and loans for small businesses and entrepreneurs, financial literacy training, and other small business training and support activities;
- civil and criminal legal assistance to provide post conviction relief and case assistance, including the expungement of criminal records and vacation of criminal convictions;
- community-based violence intervention and prevention services;
- reentry services to facilitate successful transitions for persons formerly incarcerated in an adult correctional facility or juvenile residential facility in Washington; and
- supporting statutory priorities for 911 funding, 911 emergency communications systems procurement, operation, management, administrative costs, modernization, training, public education, hardware, software, technology, and support for public safety answering points.

The Account is added to the statutory list of accounts that receive their proportionate share of earnings based on average daily balance.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The substitute bill makes the following changes to the original bill:

- modifies intent section language to remove a reference to illegal drug sales;
- removes the requirement that \$125 million be annually transferred from the Dedicated Marijuana Account to the Account;
- removes the appropriation to Commerce for establishing a cannabis equity grant program but provides that Commerce may make expenditures from the Account; and

- allows money in the Account to be used for supporting statutory priorities for 911 funding, 911 emergency communications system procurement, operation, management, administrative costs, modernization, training, public education, hardware, software, technology, and support for public safety answering points.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 11, 2022.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: This bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed, except for section 4, relating to account earnings, which takes effect July 1, 2024.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) Studies have shown that the descendants of enslaved Africans have experienced long term effects of trauma. There must be more than an acknowledgment of the problem; there must be solutions offered. Systemic racism has led to racial disparities in education and poverty in the Black community. Access to funding is needed for healing and racial reconciliation. Cannabis revenue must be reinvested in communities harmed by the war on drugs.

Other states that are legalizing cannabis are doing so with an equity lens regarding how cannabis money is spent by reinvesting cannabis revenues into the communities impacted by the war on drugs. These communities need something more than just legal cannabis. Almost 80 percent of those in federal prison for drug crimes are Black and brown while most people making money off of legal cannabis are white. This bill will not take money away from other programs. The funds will be managed by Commerce which will ensure that the funds are reinvested into the targeted communities through support for economic development, civil and criminal legal aid, violence intervention and prevention, and reentry services.

Black and brown people have been unsuccessful in obtaining cannabis retail licenses due to barriers facing BIPOC-owned retail stores. Cannabis revenue must be reinvested in communities that were harmed by the war on drugs in order to promote economic development and serve those involved in the criminal justice system. The four areas in the bill are a direct response to recommendations by the Social Equity Cannabis Task Force. This bill can help build on existing efforts to address racial disparities in the state. Public safety includes a network larger than police; it includes early education, mentoring, and other community-based systems. Greater state-level investment in prevention will help communities.

For too long, the legal system has operated in ways that have disproportionately impacted

people of color. A case does not end at sentencing. People need to get convictions vacated so they can get back to work. Access to an attorney means access to rights. This legislation is restorative by providing criminal and civil legal representation. Many drug convictions involve marijuana and were mainly attached to people of color. Consequences of these convictions may include economic injustice and housing instability. These individuals are left sidelined as Washington now prospers in the marijuana business. The Washington State Supreme Court led the charge with *State v. Blake* and now the Legislature has an opportunity to move the needle forward.

This bill is important because it centers on communities who have been excluded from opportunities such as the cannabis industry. The BIPOC communities are also impacted by health inequities, as highlighted by the pandemic; these inequities put the entire community at risk. Climate change will cause additional public health emergencies and communities need to be more protected. This bill will address past and current harms of racism but will also support recovery from COVID-19 and increase resiliency. The Cannabis Social Equity Task Force recommended 50 percent of cannabis money but \$125 million is a start. There is a billion dollars worth of need, so this bill is only a down payment. There should be an increase in the funds.

The bill seems broad and should be narrowed down to Black and brown communities. Safeguards should be added to the bill to outline what the funds can and cannot be used for. Entities with a history of certain misconduct should be barred from using these funds. There should be solid fiscal oversight of the funds to protect the program against problems that have derailed similar cannabis social equity programs. We must be good stewards of public dollars.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Melanie Morgan, prime sponsor; Ollie Garrett, Liquor and Cannabis Board; Theodore Boe, Burien Police Department; Larry Jefferson, Washington State Office of Public Defense; Jim Bamberger, Washington State Office of Civil Legal Aid; Joy Hollingsworth; Corwin Scott, Evergreen Empowerment Group; RaShelle Davis, Governor's Office; Kate Kelly, Department of Commerce; Victor Rodriguez, Governor's Interagency Council on Health Disparities; Darrell Powell, NAACP Alaska, Oregon, and Washington State Region; Jim Buchanan, Washington State African American Cannabis Association; Sheley Anderson, Craft Cannabis Coalition; Peter Manning, Black Excellence in Cannabis; and Albert Sardinas, Washington Build-Back Black Alliance.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.