

SB 718 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Committee On Human Services, Mental Health and Recovery

Prepared By: C. Ross, Counsel

Sub-Referral To: Joint Committee On Ways and Means

Meeting Dates: 3/30, 4/8

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Appropriates \$4,300,000 General Fund dollars to the Department of Human Services (DSH) for the biennium beginning July 1, 2021, to award grants to entities that support refugees, as specified. Requires a maximum of \$600,000 be awarded to an eligible established organization that provides employment and workforce development services. Declares emergency, effective July 1, 2021.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Historic nature of previous legislation, House Bill 2508 (2019); its success and renewal
- Capitalizing on the demonstrated strength and commitment of individuals who have overcome extreme suffering and loss
- Remaining hopeful and optimistic in the face of extreme adversity and trauma
- Value of the return on investment in refugees' transition and self-sufficiency, in particular the success of employment services

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

The Legislative Assembly enacted House Bill 2508 in 2019, appropriating \$4.5 million to the Department of Human Services (DHS) to award grants to supplement federal funds and mitigate against reduction, in support refugee resettlement. The measure significantly increased the duration of support services from nine to 24 months to achieve stabilization, and specifically invested in culturally responsive employment services.

Senate Bill 718 appropriates \$4,300,000 General Fund to the Department of Human Services (DSH) for the biennium beginning July 1, 2021, to continue awarding grants to entities that support refugees, and requires disbursing up to \$600,000 to an eligible established organization that provides appropriate employment and workforce development services.