

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5780

AS REPORTED BY COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS, MARCH 11, 1991

Brief Description: Enhancing employment transition programs for developmentally disabled high school students.

SPONSORS: Senators L. Smith, Wojahn, Niemi, Johnson, West, Thorsness, von Reichbauer, L. Kreidler and Craswell.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & LONG-TERM CARE

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5780 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators West, Chairman; L. Smith, Vice Chairman; Amondson, Johnson, L. Kreidler, Niemi, and Wojahn.

Staff: Suzanne Brown (786-7483)

Hearing Dates: March 5, 1991; March 6, 1991

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Majority Report: That Second Substitute Senate Bill No. 5780 be substituted therefor, and the second substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators McDonald, Chairman; Craswell, Vice Chairman; Bailey, Bauer, Bluechel, Cantu, Gaspard, Hayner, Johnson, L. Kreidler, Matson, Metcalf, Murray, Newhouse, Niemi, Rinehart, Saling, L. Smith, Talmadge, West, Williams, and Wojahn.

Staff: Judy Fitzgerald (786-7715)

Hearing Dates: March 8, 1991; March 11, 1991

BACKGROUND:

Approximately 1800 developmentally disabled citizens are currently in need of some type of employment service. In addition, the Developmental Disabilities Planning Council estimates that 250 to 300 developmentally disabled individuals graduate from high school each year needing employment services to obtain and keep a job. Some of these individuals may not request needed services. If employment services are requested, these persons are usually placed on a waiting list.

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction offer specialized programs facilitating the transition from school to work for special education students in some school districts throughout the state. Several school districts have developed innovative

programs which place these young adults in community employment settings.

Developmental Disabilities Planning Council staff reports that high school graduates who do not utilize the skills gained in the classroom tend to lose those skills over time. According to the October 1988 Washington State Interagency Transition Report, the failure to actively utilize these skills results in the loss of a \$101,000 public investment in special education per student.

SUMMARY:

The Legislature intends to expand services to developmentally disabled secondary school graduates within available resources.

The Secretary of the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) must establish a regional disabilities employment function to promote and enhance effective transition from educational or treatment programs to employment for persons with functional limitations. These functional limitations include developmental disabilities, traumatic brain injuries, mental illness and other chronic impairments. Other duties of the function must include the enhanced use of alternative resources and the promotion of competitive, integrated employment opportunities.

The secretary must contract with existing community organizations on a competitive basis to provide the regional disabilities employment function. Characteristics of eligible contractors are enumerated.

Regional disabilities employment contractors must develop a package of incentives which enhance the disabled student's transition from school to work. These packages are offered by application to interested local school districts.

In addition, contractors must collaborate with a variety of local entities to develop and encourage community partnerships which create employment opportunities for functionally disabled persons in transition from school or treatment programs to work.

Educational programs for all handicapped students aged 15 and older must include the development of life and vocational skills necessary to achieve appropriate opportunities in the community. Parents or guardians must be involved in the selection of appropriate employment or community opportunities.

At the direction of the parent or guardian, the school must provide funding to finance and contract with parents and the regional disabilities contractor to provide appropriate employment and/or community opportunities for the handicapped student outside of the school setting. The funding must equal the portion of state funds generated by the average handicapped student.

EFFECT OF PROPOSED SUBSTITUTE:

The regional disabilities employment contractor's services are limited to individuals with developmental disabilities, traumatic brain injuries and mental illness.

Parents or guardians must be involved in selecting appropriate employment or community opportunities provided through the student's educational program.

EFFECT OF PROPOSED SECOND SUBSTITUTE:

The appropriation of \$2,400,000 for contracts is deleted. The requirement for schools to provide funding for developmentally disabled students to receive services off the school grounds is removed. The requirement that DSHS provide employment transition services to at least 560 graduating students in 1991-92 is removed. Regional advisory boards are established to nominate to the Secretary of DSHS potential contractors for the disabilities employment function. Recent requirements of federal law regarding transition services for DD students over age 16 are established in state law. The bill is made contingent upon funding in the budget.

Appropriation: none

Revenue: none

Fiscal Note: available

TESTIMONY FOR (Health & Long-Term Care):

The bill provides an effective first step toward addressing the needs of young adults with special needs. The bill provides needed opportunities for young adults with developmental disabilities leaving the school system. The bill supports the recommendations of both the 1988 Washington State Interagency Transition Plan and the Developmental Disabilities 1990 Report.

TESTIMONY AGAINST (Health & Long-Term Care):

The use of the term "functional definition" may result in some confusion for the involved agencies. The Department of Social and Health Services cannot support the bill because it is not included in the Governor's proposed 1991-93 biennium budget.

TESTIFIED (Health & Long-Term Care): Sharon Hansen, Developmental Disabilities Planning Council (pro); Jeanne Munro, Department of Social and Health Services

TESTIMONY FOR (Ways & Means):

Currently many of the state's DD children who receive services through the schools have no employment or programs after they leave school. The skills they have learned tend to diminish over time with no day programs. This will would allow the

transition from the school setting to employment or day treatment.

TESTIMONY AGAINST (Ways & Means): None

TESTIFIED (Ways & Means): Ken Kanikeberg, OSPI; Jeff Larsen (pro); Michael Doctor (pro); Sharon Hansen (pro)