

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1971

As Reported By House Committee On: Appropriations

Title: An act relating to preventing double payment for insurance benefits for teachers who are members of the legislature.

Brief Description: Preventing double payment for insurance benefits for teachers who are legislators.

Sponsors: Representatives Bush, Lambert, Carrell, Talcott, Johnson, Hickel, Cody, Linville, Mitchell, Delvin, Mulliken, Veloria, Zellinsky, Thompson, Smith, Tokuda, Koster, Sherstad, Cole, Mastin, D. Schmidt and Backlund.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Appropriations: 2/24/97, 2/26/97 [DPS].

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 27 members: Representatives Huff, Chairman; Alexander, Vice Chairman; Clements, Vice Chairman; Wensman, Vice Chairman; H. Sommers, Ranking Minority Member; Doumit, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Gombosky, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Benson; Carlson; Chopp; Cody; Cooke; Crouse; Dyer; Grant; Keiser; Kenney; Kessler; Lambert; Linville; Mastin; McMorris; Parlette; Poulsen; Sehlin; Sheahan and Tokuda.

Staff: Elissa Benson (786-7191).

Background: Teachers who are on leave of absence to serve as legislators can receive insurance benefits as state employees through the Health Care Authority (HCA). Many of these teachers also have the option to continue their district-provided insurance benefits during their leave of absence, but on a self-pay basis. Presented with these choices, teacher-legislators may choose to receive coverage as state employees and then return to their K-12 provided benefits when they return to their regular employment after the legislative session is over. Though the teacher-legislator has returned to coverage through their school district, the Legislature continues to pay for insurance benefits for that legislator through the Health Care Authority.

Summary of Substitute Bill: Teachers on leave of absence to serve as legislators can choose between receiving HCA insurance benefits as state employees or choose to have the Legislature pay the school district for the cost of continuing district-provided benefits while the legislator is on leave from the school district. The amount of the payment to the school district cannot exceed the cost of the benefit package provided by the HCA to state employees.

The HCA is directed to adopt rules regarding legislators' choice for HCA insurance benefits or the continuation of district provided insurance benefits.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The substitute bill establishes that if a teacher-legislator chooses to have his or her school-district benefits continued by the Legislature, the payment for those benefits will be paid by the Legislature to the school district. The original bill had payment going to the teacher-legislator as a reimbursement for the self-pay costs of continuing district insurance benefits. In addition, the original bill did not contain a section establishing a process for issuing warrants for payment. The warrant section is included in the substitute bill.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.

Testimony For: None.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: None.