

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 1971

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Ways & Means, February 23, 1998

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: House Committee on Appropriations (originally sponsored by 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: Ways & Means: 4/2/97, 4/4/97 [DP]; 2/19/98, 2/23/98 [DP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators West, Chair; Deccio, Vice Chair; Bauer, Brown, Fraser, Hochstatter, Kohl, Long, McDonald, Roach, Rossi, Schow, B. Sheldon, Snyder, Spanel, Swecker, Thibaudeau, Winsley and Zarelli.

Staff: Deb Kime (786-7454)

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 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.

The Chief Clerk of the House of Representative and the Secretary of the Senate must prepare vouchers for the State Treasurer for sums covering amounts due any teacher who is on a leave of absence as a legislator, and who has chosen to continue employer-provided insurance benefits on a self-pay basis, in lieu of insurance benefits provided to that legislator as a state employee.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 17, 1998.

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

Testimony For: This bill will prevent teachers from receiving double coverage and, as a result, save taxpayers money. Other vehicles to accomplish this were explored « WAC and policy changes. A statutory change appears to be the only way to implement this change.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Representative Bush (pro).