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**SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 5537**

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**State of Washington**

**55th Legislature**

**1997 Regular Session**

**By** Senate Committee on Human Services & Corrections (originally sponsored by Senators Stevens, Rasmussen, Zarelli, Brown, Morton and Oke)

Read first time 02/26/97.

1 AN ACT Relating to an ex-offender transitional work program; adding  
2 a new section to chapter 50.62 RCW; creating a new section; and making  
3 appropriations.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that ex-offenders who  
6 obtain and retain employment upon release from incarceration are less  
7 likely to reoffend and return to prison. Furthermore, ex-offenders  
8 face unique and often overwhelming obstacles in finding and retaining  
9 employment as a result of their criminal histories and skill deficits.  
10 The legislature further finds that, based on the more than twenty-year  
11 history of the employment security department's ex-offender work  
12 orientation program, providing job development, job referral, and  
13 direct job placement services to ex-offenders can be a cost-effective  
14 use of taxpayer resources to assist ex-offenders in overcoming the  
15 obstacles to their employment.

16 The legislature intends, therefore, to expand transitional  
17 employment services for ex-offenders through community-based  
18 organizations.

1        NEW SECTION.    **Sec. 2.**    A new section is added to chapter 50.62 RCW  
2 to read as follows:

3        (1) The employment security department shall provide, subject to  
4 available funds, transitional employment services to eligible  
5 offenders. Transitional employment services may include: (a) Skill  
6 identification; (b) job finding techniques; (c) supportive services  
7 necessary for offenders to obtain or retain jobs; (d) job referrals and  
8 direct placement; and (e) facilitating employment upgrades after  
9 initial placements.

10        (2) Offenders are eligible for transitional employment services if  
11 they: (a) Are in a work release program; (b) are under community  
12 supervision or community placement; or (c) have been released from a  
13 correctional facility within the previous two years.

14        (3) The employment security department shall develop and implement  
15 a method for evaluating the outcomes of the services provided,  
16 including the extent to which the transitional employment services  
17 affect the recidivism rates of participating offenders in comparison  
18 with the recidivism rates of nonparticipating offenders.

19        NEW SECTION.    **Sec. 3.**    (1) The sum of eight hundred thousand  
20 dollars, or as much thereof as may be necessary, is appropriated for  
21 the biennium ending June 30, 1999, from the administrative contingency  
22 fund to the employment security department for the purposes of  
23 providing transitional employment services to ex-offenders through the  
24 ex-offender work orientation program.

25        (2) The sum of five hundred thousand dollars, or as much thereof as  
26 may be necessary, is appropriated for the biennium ending June 30,  
27 1999, from the general fund to the employment security department for  
28 the purposes of providing transitional employment services to  
29 additional offenders in geographic areas of the state not currently  
30 served by the program.

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