

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## HB 2367

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### As Reported By House Committee On:

Children & Family Services

**Title:** An act relating to public assistance recipients participating in higher education programs.

**Brief Description:** Including higher education programs in the work activity definition.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Kenney, Carlson, Tokuda, Edmonds, Lovick, Stensen, Lantz, Veloria, Doumit, Dickerson, Kagi, Murray, Wolfe, Ogden, Schual-Berke, Kessler, Regala and Santos.

### Brief History:

#### Committee Activity:

Children & Family Services: 1/17/00, 2/2/00 [DPS].

#### Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Allows state and federal work study to qualify as a "work activity" to fulfill the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) work requirement.
- Allows internships and practicums, as required to complete a course of vocational training or to obtain a license or certificate in a high demand field, to qualify as a "work activity" to fulfill the TANF work requirement.

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### HOUSE COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICES

**Majority Report:** The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 10 members: Representatives D. Sommers, Republican Co-Chair; Tokuda, Democratic Co-Chair; Boldt, Republican Vice Chair; Kagi, Democratic Vice Chair; Campbell; Carrell; Dickerson; Eickmeyer; Kastama and Pflug.

**Staff:** Tracey Taylor (786-7196).

### Background:

Under the WorkFirst program, TANF recipients are required to engage in job-related activities. There are certain work-related activities that fulfill this requirement, including subsidized paid employment, on-the-job training, and some vocational education.

Work-study is a need-based financial aid program that subsidizes the wages of students employed through the program. Under the state program, employers who hire work study participants get partially reimbursed by the state for the students' wages. If it is an on-campus employer, the employer gets reimbursed 80 percent of the wages paid; if it is an off-campus employer, the employer gets reimbursed 65 percent of the wages paid. The statutes establishing the state work-study program prohibit the displacement of existing employees in order to employ a work-study student and receive the subsidy.

Internships and practicums are supervised practical training. In vocational programs, nearly all the degree and certificate programs require some form of an internship or practicum, as do the majority of programs in the medical fields. The terms of the internship or practicum, including the hours, length, and whether it is paid or unpaid are up to the individual institutions of higher education.

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**Summary of Substitute Bill:**

The types of activities that fulfill the work requirement under TANF are expanded. The on-the-job training has been further defined to include some internships and practicums. To qualify, the internship or practicum must be required to complete a course of vocational training or to obtain a license or certificate in a high demand field. The Employment Security Department shall define what constitutes a "high demand field." The internship or practicum shall not exceed 12 months in duration. Also, state and federal work study will fulfill the work requirement; however, it is limited to a maximum of 24 months.

**Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:** The substitute clarifies that state and federal work study falls under the work activity of "subsidized paid employment" and limits it to a maximum of 24 months. The substitute also clarifies that internships and practicums fall under the work activity of "on-the-job training." For an internship or practicum to qualify as a "work activity," it must be required to complete a course of vocational training or to obtain a license or certificate in a high demand field. The internship or practicum shall not exceed 12 months.

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**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Effective Date of Substitute Bill:** Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

**Testimony For:** Studies have found that post-secondary education helps low-income women make a living wage. The bill is a cost-effective method to go from welfare to work. As working parents may receive child care assistance by allowing an internship or practicum to count for WorkFirst, it also promotes self-reliance. Many vocational programs require an internship or practicum as part of the degree or certificate requirement; thus, current law does not allow WorkFirst participants to complete the program in a timely fashion, if at all.

**Testimony Against:** None.

**Testified:** (In support) Representative Phyllis Kenney, prime sponsor; Jeremy Kelley, Washington Student Lobby; Jean Coleman, Welfare Rights Organization Coalition; Judy Turpin, American Association of University Women; Seth Dawson, Common Ground for Children; Sara Fleming Merten, Washington Association of Churches; Donna Christensen, Catholic Conference; and Allison Morrell, student, Saint Martins College.

(Comments) Ken Miller, Office of Financial Management.