

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 1811

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Health & Long-Term Care, April 1, 1999

Title: An act relating to supported employment.

Brief Description: Revising provisions relating to supported employment for persons with severe disabilities.

Sponsors: House Committee on Children & Family Services (originally sponsored by Representatives Tokuda, Boldt, D. Sommers, Kenney and Ogden; by request of Department of Social and Health Services).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Health & Long-Term Care: 3/22/99, 4/1/99 [DPA].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & LONG-TERM CARE

Majority Report: Do pass as amended.

Signed by Senators Thibaudeau, Chair; Wojahn, Vice Chair; Costa, Deccio, Franklin and Winsley.

Staff: Rhoda Jones (786-7198)

Background: Persons with developmental disabilities may be employed by state agencies in supported employment. These positions offer on-the-job training and long-term support. Supported employment offers the same wages and benefits as similar nonsupported employment positions.

Currently, the only individuals who qualify for these positions must fit the definition of developmentally disabled defined in state statute (RCW 71A.10.020).

Summary of Amended Bill: People who qualify for supported employment programs include those with "significant disabilities" as defined in federal regulation. This expands the eligibility to include individuals who have one or more physical or mental disability resulting from an injury or illness which may or may not have occurred by age 18. These include arthritis, autism, blindness, cancer, mental illness, quadriplegia, learning disabilities, and other chronic disabling conditions.

The Department of Social and Health Services must collect information on the people who participate in the supported employment program and identify their disability. This information must be submitted to the Department of Personnel who will produce an annual report to the Legislature upon request.

Amended Bill Compared to Substitute Bill: The striking amendment clarifies that the Department of Personnel is not required to collect participants by disability type.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: More opportunity for employment is needed for people with disabilities.

Testimony Against: This unnecessarily expands government. People with disabilities should not be identified or treated as categories.

Testified: PRO: Representative Tokuda, prime sponsor; Jan Hoppler, DSHS; Jeanne Munro, DSHS; Andrea Stevenson; Cheryl Metcalf, ARC; Brad Boswell, NAMI; CON: Joe Johnston, NW Chapter of Paralyzed Veterans of America.