

SENATE BILL REPORT

2SHB 2364

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Health & Long-Term Care, February 23, 2000

Title: An act relating to eliminating employment barriers for individuals with disabilities.

Brief Description: Eliminating employment barriers for individuals with disabilities.

Sponsors: House Committee on Appropriations (originally sponsored by Representatives Cody, Carlson, Edmonds, Parlette, Edwards, Kastama, Conway, Schual-Berke, Kagi, Kenney, Tokuda, Murray, Ogden, Ruderman, McDonald, Stensen, Van Luven, Lovick, Veloria, Poulsen, Wood, Kessler, Regala, Reardon, Cooper, Anderson and Santos).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Health & Long-Term Care: 2/16/2000, 2/23/2000 [DP-WM].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & LONG-TERM CARE

Majority Report: Do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

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

Staff: Rhoda Jones (786-7198)

Background: Congress enacted the Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act in November 1999. The legislation authorizes individuals with disabilities to obtain employment services, vocational rehabilitation services, or other support services from an employment network of the individual's choice. The legislation also gives the state greater flexibility in removing barriers to employment for individuals with disabilities. States are allowed to modify Medicaid income and resource limits for individuals with disabilities who are earning an income. States may also allow working individuals with disabilities to buy into Medicaid even though they are no longer eligible for federal disability benefits.

Summary of Bill: The Department of Social and Health Services continues Medicaid coverage for individuals with disabilities who go to work. The department establishes earned income disregards, cost sharing, and a schedule of premiums that eliminate disincentives to work. The department also participates in the development of a ticket to work program that allows individuals with disabilities to choose their provider of vocational rehabilitation services, employment services, and other support services.

The bill is null and void unless funded in the Omnibus Appropriations Act.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 15, 2000.

Effective Date: This bill takes effect on October 1, 2000.

Testimony For: This will enable many people who want to work, or want higher wages, to be employed and not lose critical benefits.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: PRO: Skip Dreps, Northwest Chapter Paralyzed Veterans of America; Ed Hulen, D.D. Council; Lonnie Johns-Brown, Partnership 2000; Sharon Smith, Self Advocate; Andrea Stephensen, The Empower Alliance; Andy Warber, Coastal Community Advocates; Toby Olson, Governor's Committee on Disability Issues and Employment; David L. Allen, American Cancer Society.