

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 2367

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Higher Education, February 25, 2000

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: House Committee on Children & Family Services (originally sponsored by 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: Higher Education: 2/21/2000, 2/25/2000 [DP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Kohl-Welles, Chair; Shin, Vice Chair; Jacobsen, McAuliffe, Sheahan and B. Sheldon.

Staff: Jean Six (786-7423)

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.

Summary of 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 must 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.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: Case loads are down but people need family wage jobs in order to remain free of welfare. It is imperative to include work-study, internships, and practicums in the definition of work activity to help students prepare for well paying jobs. Gaining work experience while attending college is very helpful in obtaining a living wage job. Women with two years or four years of postsecondary education are more likely to remain off welfare. The language of the House bill is acceptable. The Senate version is also all right. The committee is concerned about the high demand requirement.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: PRO: Representative Kenney, prime sponsor; Jeremy Kelley, WSL; Seth Dawson, Common Ground for Children.