

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5063

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Labor & Workforce Development, February 11, 1999

Title: An act relating to adult recipients of temporary assistance for needy families enrolled in education programs.

Brief Description: Making changes in the TANF program to facilitate adult recipients' completion of education or training that will lead to gainful employment.

Sponsors: Senators B. Sheldon, Winsley, Kohl-Welles, Thibaudeau, Patterson, Hale, Bauer, Kline, Oke, Eide, Brown, Costa and McAuliffe.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Labor & Workforce Development: 2/2/99, 2/11/99 [DP, DNP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON LABOR & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Fairley, Chair; Franklin, Vice Chair; Kline, Oke and Wojahn.

Minority Report: Do not pass.

Signed by Senator Hochstatter.

Staff: Joanne Conrad (786-7472)

Background: Washington State's welfare reform program, WorkFirst, requires recipients of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) to participate in designated hours of work activities. Some TANF recipients, who are attending community and technical colleges in a Work-Study program, are limited to 19 hours of work. This conflicts with the required hours of TANF work activity.

As a result, concerns exist that some TANF recipients may experience sanction or the threat of sanction while trying to complete course work leading to a degree or certificate that may enable them to obtain unsubsidized employment.

Summary of Bill: TANF recipients who have substantially completed a community, trade, or technical college program are evaluated and facilitated by the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) in order to maintain their grant assistance without sanction while completing their training. DSHS makes a good faith effort to accommodate completion, including deeming one hour of additional work activity, if necessary.

TANF recipients who qualify for this facilitation effort are exempt from a requirement limiting them to 12 months of vocational education. A rebuttable presumption in favor of TANF recipients seeking facilitation is established.

Legislative intent that adult TANF recipients attain unsubsidized employment, and that DSHS and other relevant departments work together to facilitate successful completion of course work leading to employment is stated.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 18, 1999.

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

Testimony For: This bill is intended to encourage people to finish their education and get jobs with advancement opportunities to better their lives. Going to school should count as a work-related activity. Non-paid work such as internships and required "parent-time" at day care should count toward work requirements. DSHS is causing parents to drop out of school and abandon hope.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: PRO: Senator B. Sheldon, prime sponsor; Lisa Telford, ANEW Apprenticeship, Nontraditional Employment for Women; Randy Loomans, Washington State Labor Council; Liz Dunbar, DSHS; Seth Dawson, Common Ground for Children; Raven Hiedi Dietzen, Lyndia Kay Kennedy, WROC; Donna Dahlquist; Nina Dunning; Lorrie Herrick.