

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5560

As Passed Senate, March 16, 1999

Title: An act relating to supported employment.

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

Sponsors: Senators Franklin, Deccio, Winsley and Kohl-Welles; by request of Department of Social and Health Services.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Health & Long-Term Care: 2/10/99, 2/22/99 [DP].
Passed Senate, 3/16/99, 47-0.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & LONG-TERM CARE

Majority Report: Do pass.

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

Staff: Rhoda Jones (786-7198)

Background: Persons with developmental disabilities may be employed by the state 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 described in state statute (RCW 71A.10.020).

Summary of 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 disabilities resulting from injuries and illnesses 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.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: People with mental illness need to have access to supported employment.

Testimony Against: We support having any disabled person get supported employment. We don't want the Division of Developmental Disabilities to shoulder all the costs of supporting everyone.

Testified: Jan Hoppler, DSHS-DMH (pro); Eleanor Owen, WAMI (pro); Cherie Fesser; Jim Stegin; Donna Patrick (concerns).