

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6461

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Higher Education, February 4, 2000

Title: An act relating to work activities for recipients of temporary assistance for needy families.

Brief Description: Allowing certain training at community or technical colleges to qualify as a work activity under the temporary assistance for needy families program.

Sponsors: Senators B. Sheldon, Winsley, Costa, Patterson, Hargrove, Kline, McAuliffe, Kohl-Welles, Spanel, Rasmussen and Gardner.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Higher Education: 1/24/2000, 2/4/2000 [DPS-WM].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6461 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

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

Staff: Jean Six (786-7423)

Background: Under the WorkFirst program, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) recipients are required to engage in certain well-defined job-related activities. Some reports indicate that job-specific training provides a person with a greater likelihood of entering the workforce and becoming self-sufficient.

Summary of Substitute Bill: A TANF recipient, within the ages of 18 and 21 years, who maintains satisfactory full-time participation in a vocational or two-year community college program, an approved high school program, or a program at a proprietary school providing job-specific education or training in a high demand field is considered engaged in the TANF required work activity.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: Students may also be enrolled in approved programs at a high school or proprietary school.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 17, 2000.

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

Testimony For: Full-time students cannot fulfill the work requirement and raise a family.

Allowing students to attend school full time is a positive way to provide tools to women trying to reach self-sufficiency. We want living wages for our workers and that means more than basic skills. The combination of work, school, and raising a family is daunting. Children are the forgotten people in these discussions.

Concerns: For successful transition off welfare, students benefit from a combination of work activity and training or education.

Include a reference to secondary education. Consistent with the spirit of welfare reform. Important to remove barriers to family wage. Skilled employment. Work requirements are becoming onerous. Self-sufficiency and stability are reachable and desirable goals.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Senator Betti Sheldon, prime sponsor; Mike Mastin, DSHS (concerns); Allison Morrell; Monica Peabody; Colleen Vekich; Seth Dawson; Marie Hahler; Tasha Nicely; Melina Wilkerson; Sarah Fleming Merten; Laurie Lippold.