

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## ESJM 8014

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As Passed Senate, February 5, 2002

**Brief Description:** Requesting improvement to employment and training services for disabled persons.

**Sponsors:** Senators Prentice, Winsley, Costa, Deccio, Thibaudeau, B. Sheldon, Fairley, Franklin, Shin, Rasmussen, Regala, Kastama, Patterson, Hochstatter, Gardner, Haugen, Honeyford, Constantine, Jacobsen, McAuliffe, Oke and Kohl-Welles.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Labor, Commerce & Financial Institutions: 2/20/01, 2/22/01 [DP].

**Second Special Session:** Passed Senate: 6/19/01, 44-0.

Passed Senate: 2/5/02, 46-0.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON LABOR, COMMERCE & FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS

**Majority Report:** Do pass.

Signed by Senators Prentice, Chair; Gardner, Vice Chair; Benton, Fairley, Franklin, Hochstatter, Honeyford, Patterson, Rasmussen, Regala, West and Winsley.

**Staff:** Jack Brummel (786-7428)

**Background:** Persons with disabilities have an unemployment rate of nearly 70 percent. The disability community is the largest potential source of workers within Washington that can help meet the needs of state businesses looking for skilled workers.

**Summary of Bill:** The executive officers of the Employment Security Department, the Department of Services for the Blind, the Developmental Disability Council, the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation in the Department of Social and Health Services, the Governor's Committee on Disability Issues and Employment, the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, and the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board are requested to work together to carry out a number of functions related to employment and training of people with disabilities. The functions include identifying effective employment and training services, barriers to service delivery, and measures to evaluate success.

The agency executives are also asked to provide training and technical assistance to local workforce boards to improve outreach and delivery of services to people with disabilities. In addition, they are requested to both make recommendations on statutory or administrative changes needed to improve employment and training services for people with disabilities and to report on outcomes to the Legislature and the Governor.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

**Testimony For:** The unemployment rate of persons with disability is very high. They are an untapped resource in the state. This is the most underemployed population in the workforce. Over 200,000 working age people in the state with disabilities are without jobs. The tight labor market and the revolution in technology presents an opportunity the state should facilitate. We need an effective service system that the memorial will address.

**Testimony Against:** None.

**Testified:** Jeanne Munro, DSHS; Wes Pruitt, Workforce Bd.; Toby Olson, Governor's Committee on Disability Issues and Employment.

**House Amendment(s):** The report on outcomes is to include specific examples of programs that have benefitted people with disabilities.