

SENATE BILL REPORT

SSCR 8404

As Passed Senate, February 16, 2002

Brief Description: Adopting the update to the state comprehensive plan for work force training and education.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Higher Education (originally sponsored by Senators Kohl-Welles, Prentice, Winsley, Carlson, Horn, McAuliffe and Franklin).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Higher Education: 2/8/01, 2/15/01 [DPS-WM]; 1/17/02 [DP].
Passed Senate: 4/4/01, 46-2; 2/16/02, 45-2.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass.

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

Staff: Jean Six (786-7423)

Background: The Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board (WTECB) is required to develop and maintain a comprehensive plan for workforce training and education. RCW 28C.18.080 requires the plan to be updated every two years and submitted to the Governor and the appropriate policy committees of the Legislature. Following public hearings, the Legislature recommends approval or changes to the plan which then becomes the state's workforce training policy.

Summary of Bill: The Legislature thanks the WTECB for detailing the challenges facing Washington in achieving a workforce development system that offers each citizen access to life-long high quality academic and skills education, effective help when looking for work, and personalized assistance for progress in the labor market.

The WTECB identified goals are: (1) to close the gap between the needs of employers for skilled workers and the supply of Washington residents prepared to meet that need; (2) to enable workers to make smooth transitions so that they, and their employers, may fully benefit from the new, changing economy by putting in place a coherent strategy for dislocated and incumbent worker training; (3) to assist disadvantaged youth, persons with disabilities, new labor market entrants, recent immigrants, and other low-wage workers by developing a wage progression strategy for low-income workers; and (4) to make the vision of WorkSource a reality so that workforce development programs are customer friendly, broadly accessible, and fully committed to continuous quality improvement.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: This plan is in response to a challenge by Governor Locke, as well as in response to the legislative directive. A broad-based community process was used to develop the strategies to meet the challenge. Washington State has the most comprehensive array of tools to address dislocated worker problems.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Ellen O'Brien Saunders, Exec. Director, WTECB.