

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SHB 1061

As Passed House:

March 11, 2003

Title: An act relating to creating associate degree pathways for apprentices.

Brief Description: Authorizing associate degree pathways for persons in apprenticeship programs at community and technical colleges.

Sponsors: By House Committee on Higher Education (originally sponsored by Representatives Veloria, Kenney, Conway, Cox, Hunt, Clements, Morrell, Campbell, Kessler, Simpson, Wood and Berkey).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Higher Education: 2/4/03, 2/18/03 [DPS].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 3/11/03, 92-0.

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Requires community and technical colleges to develop associate degree pathways for apprentices, if necessary resources are available and if the local apprenticeship committee and college determine a pathway would benefit apprentices.
- Directs the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) to convene a work group to examine current rules regarding instruction, course grading, and tuition waivers to reduce barriers for apprentices to earn associate degrees.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 15 members: Representatives Kenney, Chair; Fromhold, Vice Chair; Cox, Ranking Minority Member; Priest, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Berkey, Boldt, Buck, Chase, Clements, Condotta, Gombosky, Jarrett, Lantz, McCoy and Morrell.

Staff: Barbara McLain (786-7383).

Background:

Apprenticeship Programs: Apprenticeship programs enable individuals to learn trades and occupations through a combination of on-the-job training and related and supplemental instruction. Programs are sponsored by joint employer and labor groups, individual employers, or employer associations. Sponsoring groups make up the apprenticeship committee that oversees the program. The end product of an apprenticeship is a certificate of "journey status," a nationally recognized standard within the specific occupational field of the apprentice.

Community and Technical Colleges: Most apprenticeship committees contract with a community or technical college to provide the program's related and supplemental instruction. For the 2001-02 academic year, 24 community and technical colleges provided instruction for nearly 12,000 apprentices (about 2,600 full-time equivalent students).

Associate Degrees: Fourteen colleges have created agreements within the college that allow apprentices to count portions of their related and supplemental instruction toward a special associate degree. Four of the largest programs offer a Multi-Occupational Trades Associate of Applied Science (AAS) degree for apprentices in the trades. Once the student reaches journey status, only a few additional courses (usually in general education such as English, writing, or college-level math) are needed to receive the AAS. The number of additional courses may vary according to the level of rigor within the apprenticeship program, and the degree is specific to the apprentice's particular trade.

Ten colleges only offer a special associate degree for apprentices in certain fields (usually for educational paraprofessionals). The remaining 10 colleges with apprenticeship programs do not currently have an associate degree pathway specifically for apprentices.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

An apprenticeship committee can recommend to its community or technical college partner that an associate degree pathway be developed for the committee's apprenticeship program. In consultation with the SBCTC, the committee and the college will consider the extent that apprentices in the program are likely to pursue a degree. If the committee and college determine that an associate degree pathway would be beneficial for apprentices, the committee can request that the college develop one.

After receiving such a request and if the necessary resources are available, the college will develop an associate degree program for apprentices. The college will ensure to the extent possible that related and supplemental instruction provided within the apprenticeship program is credited toward the degree, and that other degree requirements are not redundant.

The SBCTC will convene a work group to examine current laws and rules pertaining to instruction for apprentices. The objective is to reduce barriers for apprentices to earn associate degrees. Topics to be examined include use of graded versus ungraded courses and tuition waivers for apprenticeship courses. A report is due to the Legislature by December 15, 2003.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 27, 2003.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: There is a great need for workers to have advanced training and education in our economy. One underutilized source for training is apprenticeship programs. Expanding opportunities for these individuals to earn associate degrees makes the apprenticeship experience more attractive. We need to develop career pathways for these students, from high school through apprenticeship through college and beyond. There are new federal requirements for education paraprofessionals. Apprenticeship can help provide the training, but we need to build an opportunity to earn an associate degree.

(Concerns with original bill) The request for a pathway should not have to go through the State Apprenticeship Council, which could add months to the decision-making process. The necessary relationship and discussion is between the local apprenticeship committee and the college directly. The bill seems overly prescriptive. This could be interpreted as an unfunded mandate on the colleges.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: (In support) Representative Veloria, prime sponsor; Rebecca Rhodes, State Board for Community and Technical Colleges; Randy Loomans, Washington State Labor Council; Patrick Woods, Department of Labor and Industries; and Kim Peery, Public School Employees of Washington.

(In support with concerns) Rick Slunaker, Associated General Contractors.