

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2317

As Reported by House Committee On:
Higher Education

Title: An act relating to defining high demand.

Brief Description: Requiring development of a definition of "high demand."

Sponsors: Representatives Wallace, Anderson, Sells and Kenney.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Higher Education: 2/27/07 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Requires development of one definition of high demand.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 9 members: Representatives Wallace, Chair; Sells, Vice Chair; Anderson, Ranking Minority Member; Buri, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Hasegawa, Jarrett, McIntire, Roberts and Sommers.

Staff: Jennifer Thornton (786-7111).

Background:

The term "high demand" is used frequently in higher education, employment preparation, and workforce-related services. However, there is not a common definition or list used by all agencies and institutions working in these areas. The usage of the term "high demand" varies, and includes high demand programs of study, high demand occupations, high student demand, and high community demand, among others. The term is used in many reports, and funding is appropriated from the Legislature specifically for high demand. For example, the 2006 Supplemental Budget appropriated:

- \$1.5 million to the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) to fund 187 additional full-time equivalents (FTE) in high demand fields;

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

- \$900,000 to the Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB) for 95 FTEs in high demand fields at Washington's regional universities and The Evergreen State College;
- \$1.174 million to Washington State University to fund 80 additional FTEs in high demand fields; and
- \$2.5 million to the University of Washington to fund 150 additional FTEs in high demand fields.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

The HECB, the SBCTC, the Office of Financial Management, the Employment Security Department, and the Department of Community, Trade, and Economic Development will prepare and jointly submit one definition of high demand to the Legislature by November 1, 2007.

The definition will subsequently be used by all agencies and institutions that offer post-secondary education, employment preparation, and workforce-related services.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board and Council of Presidents are added to the list of agencies responsible for developing and submitting the definition of high demand.

Appropriation: None.**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.**Effective Date of Substitute Bill:** The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:**

(In support) There was a group called together by the Governor's policy and budget staff to address this specific issue. The group recognizes the confusion and supports the bill and the amendment. At this time, agreement on draft terms has been reached, with the conclusion that there are three different terms for high demand: high employer demand program of study; high demand occupations; and high student demand program of study. The next step will be to share the draft definitions at the regional and local level for input. Later, it will be used in the joint report by the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, the Higher Education Coordinating Board, and the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board. The first joint report looked at the number of prepared workers and job openings they could enter. Clarification on the definition is an essential step to improving these reports. All the agencies will then use the common definition.

Transparent criteria for high demand programs is important. The state imports many people in engineering and other fields and this will help reverse that trend.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Randy Spaulding, Higher Education Coordinating Board; Cindy Morana, Council of Presidents; Bryan Wilson, Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board; Loretta Seppanen, State Board for Community and Technical Colleges; and Jeff Gombosky, Prosperity Partnership.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.