

SENATE BILL REPORT

HB 1644

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Higher Education, March 21, 2007

Title: An act relating to health care eligibility for part-time academic employees of community and technical colleges.

Brief Description: Modifying health care eligibility provisions for part-time academic employees of community and technical colleges.

Sponsors: Representatives Kenney, Sells, Anderson, Appleton, Morrell, Linville, Roberts, Ormsby, McDermott, Conway, Schual-Berke and Haigh; by request of Health Care Authority.

Brief History: Passed House: 3/09/07, 97-0.

Committee Activity: Higher Education: 3/19/07, 3/21/07 [DPA].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass as amended.

Signed by Senators Shin, Chair; Kilmer, Vice Chair; Delvin, Ranking Minority Member; Berkey and Schoesler.

Staff: Aldo Melchiori (786-7439)

Background: In the fall of 2003, part-time faculty comprised 66 percent of the faculty at Washington's public two-year institutions. Part-time academic employees at community and technical colleges are currently eligible for full health care benefits beginning the second consecutive quarter of employment, at half-time or more. They are also eligible for health benefits through the summer, even if they receive no work that quarter, if they have worked half-time or more of an academic workload in three of the four preceding quarters.

Summary of Bill: Summer quarter is removed from the definition of academic year. Therefore, part-time employees are eligible for benefits during the summer, regardless of the summer quarter workload, if they have worked an average of half-time or more for three quarters in each of the preceding two years. Benefits continue as long as the employee works half-time or more in two of the three quarters of the academic year (instead of the current three of the four quarters). Benefits cease as soon as the employee no longer meets eligibility requirements.

EFFECT OF CHANGES MADE BY RECOMMENDED STRIKING AMENDMENT(S) AS PASSED COMMITTEE (Higher Education): Part-time faculty working during the summer quarter are allowed to use the summer workload in calculating eligibility for

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continuous coverage. The current definition of academic year is retained, including the summer. Employees who work at least two quarters of the academic year and have an average workload of half-time or more for three quarters of the academic year are able to maintain continuous benefits.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: This legislation builds on and improves the health care policies for part-time faculty that were initiated last session. Part-time instructors particularly appreciate this effort to recognize their efforts.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Representative Kenney, prime sponsor; Philip Jack, AFT-Washington; Dennis Martin, Health Care Authority; John Bosenberg, State Board for Community and Technical College.