

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5554

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Economic Development, Trade & Innovation, January 29, 2009

Title: An act relating to the job skills program.

Brief Description: Regarding the job skills program.

Sponsors: Senators Kilmer, Hobbs, Kastama, King, Jarrett, Marr, McAuliffe, Shin and Pridemore.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Economic Development, Trade & Innovation: 1/28/09, 1/29/09 [DP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, TRADE & INNOVATION

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Kastama, Chair; Shin, Vice Chair; Zarelli, Ranking Minority Member; Delvin, Eide, Kilmer and McCaslin.

Staff: Philip Brady (786-7460)

Background: The Job Skills Program was created by the Legislature in 1983 to provide customized job training to meet the needs of employers by serving dislocated and disadvantaged individuals. It is directed towards programs of skills training or education separate from existing vocational education programs, and focuses on short-term specific training for new and growing industries in areas with a high concentration of disadvantaged people and unemployment, or places where new skills are required to avoid worker dislocation.

The Jobs Skills Program was appropriated \$2.725 million for fiscal year 2009. It is administered by the State Board of Community and Technical Colleges (the state board) with the advice of the Workforce Training Customer Advisory Committee (the advisory committee). The state board is authorized to provide job skills grants to education institutions if such grants are consistent with 11 criteria including the use of alternative funding, effectiveness and efficiency of the proposed program, an inability to otherwise create the proposed program, use of collaboration with industry and labor, and agreements for mandatory information reporting.

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.

Summary of Bill: The state board and the advisory committee are directed to give priority to applications from firms in strategic industry clusters that would be coordinated with other cluster-based programs, would create industry-based credentialing, and would create programs where benefits might extend to persons beyond the grant recipients.

Jobs skills programs are defined as those that focus on promotion of the growth of industry clusters rather than those serving areas with new and growing industries.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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 bill would increase actual training, focuses on the consortium or cluster-based approach, and encourages collaboration even before proposals are made to the Job Skill Program. This streamlines training and is consistent with Washington's overall cluster-based strategy. Tough times are an opportunity to refocus this program and make it even more effective than it already is. By collecting and retaining data through this program, money is saved in the long term.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Jim Crabbe, State Board for Community and Technical Colleges; Bryan Wilson, Workforce Training Customer Advisory Board; Amber Carter, Association of Washington Business.