

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6695

As of February 2, 2010

Title: An act relating to the leave sharing program.

Brief Description: Establishing the number of days of shared leave an employee is eligible to receive.

Sponsors: Senators Fraser, Pridemore, Swecker and Hobbs.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Government Operations & Elections: 2/01/10.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS & ELECTIONS

Staff: Edward Redmond (786-7471)

Background: The Washington State Leave Sharing Program (Program) was enacted by the Legislature in 1989 for state employees. The Program permits state agency, school district, and educational service district employees to donate some of their annual sick leave to fellow employees that may lose their job or go on leave without pay due to certain specified conditions. These conditions include extraordinary illness, injury, or impairment that has caused an employee to exhaust the balance of their sick and annual leave. The illness or injury may be to an employee, a relative, or an employee's household member. The head of the agency determines the amount of leave an eligible employee may receive; however, the total amount may not exceed 261 days. The Program was expanded in 2003 to employees called to uniformed service.

Summary of Bill: The amount of leave a state employee may receive is amended to correspond with the employee's service years. An employee with service of less than 10 years is eligible to receive up to 261 days of leave; between 10 to 19 years, up to 522 days; and with 20 or more years, up to 783 days. Shared leave received under the uniformed service shared leave pool is not subject to these limitations. The director of personnel is authorized to adopt rules as necessary to implement such changes.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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.

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 is a compassionate bill, whereby employees who are healthy and do not need all their leave days can contribute that leave to employees who are ill. This bill would cost extremely little but would have an immense impact on state employees. At the age of 46, I was diagnosed with multiple myeloma, cancer of the plasma cells in bone marrow. It is an incurable and fatal disease but there is treatment that can keep me alive for several more years. Since being diagnosed, I have continued to work as much as I can but have had to cut back as my disease has progressed. Many employees who get sick worry about their work; they do not want to burden their colleagues if they will have to take time off for treatment. The leave sharing program makes good business sense for the state. Employees can use shared leave and stay off state disability. Passage of this bill is one small step the state can take to help its employees at a time when lots of sacrifices are being asked of state employees.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Fraser, prime sponsor; Alia Griffing, Washington Federation of State Employees; Andrew McMillan, citizen; Gordon White, Department of Ecology.