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SENATE BILL 5555

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State of Washington

61st Legislature

2009 Regular Session

By Senators Kilmer, Shin, King, Marr, Jarrett, McAuliffe, Hobbs, Tom, and Kohl-Welles

Read first time 01/26/09. Referred to Committee on Higher Education & Workforce Development.

1 AN ACT Relating to lifelong learning accounts; adding new sections  
2 to chapter 28C.18 RCW; adding a new section to chapter 28B.76 RCW; and  
3 creating a new section.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** Lifelong learning accounts are portable  
6 employee-owned and employer-matched savings accounts dedicated to  
7 covering the cost of tuition, fees, books, supplies, and equipment for  
8 working adults seeking education and training to improve their position  
9 in the workforce. The legislature finds that lifelong learning  
10 accounts allow employers and workers to coinvest in their futures. The  
11 legislature further finds that, combined with free career advising,  
12 lifelong learning accounts can make a significant difference in the  
13 lives of workers and their families, as well as for employers in need  
14 of well-trained workers. The legislature intends to facilitate the  
15 creating of lifelong learning accounts for workers in the state of  
16 Washington.

17 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 28C.18 RCW  
18 to read as follows:

1 (1) The board shall establish a state lifelong learning account  
2 steering committee. The steering committee shall consist of  
3 representatives from: (a) The association of Washington business; (b)  
4 the higher education coordinating board; (c) the state board for  
5 community and technical colleges; (d) the department of community,  
6 trade, and economic development; (e) the Washington state hospital  
7 association; (f) the Pacific mountain workforce development council;  
8 (g) the state and regional AFL-CIO and SEIU; and (h) other business and  
9 labor representatives.

10 (2) The steering committee shall: (a) Develop a policy framework  
11 to establish a statewide lifelong learning account program; (b)  
12 identify technical and budget issues along with recommendations on how  
13 to resolve them; (c) study methods for continuing outreach to workers,  
14 employers, and foundations, willing to participate in and fund lifelong  
15 learning accounts; (d) explore career advising options including online  
16 tools; and (e) design a performance accountability system.

17 (3) The steering committee shall receive staff and logistical  
18 support from the board. The board shall enter into an interagency  
19 agreement with the higher education coordinating board to provide  
20 technical expertise in the development of infrastructure and software  
21 plans necessary for a sustainable lifelong learning account program.

22 (4) The steering committee shall report to the appropriate  
23 committees of the legislature by September 1, 2010, and every two years  
24 thereafter, regarding the numbers and characteristics of participating  
25 workers and employers, the status of outreach efforts, and other  
26 appropriate performance outcome measures identified by the steering  
27 committee.

28 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** A new section is added to chapter 28B.76 RCW  
29 to read as follows:

30 (1) The board, consistent with the policies established by the  
31 state lifelong learning account steering committee established in  
32 section 2 of this act, shall plan and develop the financial  
33 infrastructure required for a statewide lifelong learning account  
34 program.

35 (2) In developing the financial infrastructure, the board shall  
36 consider:

1 (a) The ability of program participants to receive tax benefits for  
2 contributions;

3 (b) Growth and the ability of the program to become self-  
4 supporting;

5 (c) The investment strategies required to support infrastructure;  
6 and

7 (d) Other considerations it identifies.

8 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** A new section is added to chapter 28C.18 RCW  
9 to read as follows:

10 The board may solicit, accept, receive, and administer federal  
11 funds or private funds, in trust or otherwise, and contract with  
12 foundations or with for-profit or nonprofit organizations to support  
13 the establishment of the state lifelong learning account program.

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