

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6405

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Economic Development, Trade & Innovation, February 1, 2012

Title: An act relating to the Washington service corps.

Brief Description: Concerning the Washington service corps.

Sponsors: Senators Hargrove and Frockt.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Economic Development, Trade & Innovation: 1/30/12, 2/01/12 [DPS-WM, DNP, w/oRec].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, TRADE & INNOVATION

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6405 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators Kastama, Chair; Chase, Vice Chair; Ericksen, Hatfield, Kilmer and Shin.

Minority Report: Do not pass.

Signed by Senator Holmquist Newbry.

Minority Report: That it be referred without recommendation.

Signed by Senator Baumgartner, Ranking Minority Member.

Staff: Jack Brummel (786-7428)

Background: During the great depression, public work relief programs, such as the Civilian Conservation Corps, provided employment and training to thousands who had difficulty finding jobs. The tradition of such job programs has continued in Washington with the Washington Conservation Corps and the Washington Service Corps (WSC).

WSC was created by the Legislature in 1983. The Department of Employment Security administers the program. WSC provides unemployed and out-of-school youth, between 18 and 26 years of age, with temporary jobs that benefit the youth's local community. The goal of the program is to enhance the employability of these youth while addressing unmet local community needs. Efforts to enroll economically, socially, physically, or educationally disadvantaged youth are required.

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.

Participants serve for 11 months and receive a stipend, health insurance, training, and eligibility for a scholarship if the participant completes the full 11 months. The scholarship is equivalent to two-year's tuition at a community or technical college. The program allows for a six-month extension of service.

Sixty percent of the general funds available to the service corps program are earmarked for enrollees from distressed areas and for projects in distressed areas.

The Art in Public Places program, or the 1/2 of 1% for Art program, was established by the Legislature in July 1974. The program is funded from the state's capital construction budget. One-half of 1 percent of construction budgets for state-owned buildings is added for the acquisition of artwork. The 1/2 of 1% for Art program for state agencies and public schools applies only to new construction. The 1/2 of 1% for Art program for universities and colleges, in addition to new construction, includes renovation projects exceeding \$200,000. Fifteen percent of each percent for art allocation is used for administrative costs.

Summary of Bill (Recommended Substitute): All state agencies must allocate, out of monies appropriated for construction of a public building, one-half of 1 percent of the appropriation to WSC for minor public works. WSC is expanded to provide employment opportunities and its other services to the unemployed. Cities and counties are specifically authorized to be supervising agencies which develop service projects.

The Director of WSC must prioritize the distribution of the one-half of 1 percent allocated to WSC to counties in the following order: (1) rural counties with unemployment rates more than 20 percent above the state average; (2) rural counties with unemployment rates between 5 percent and 20 percent above the state average; (3) all other rural counties; (4) nonrural counties with unemployment rates more than 20 percent above the state average; and (5) all other nonrural counties.

EFFECT OF CHANGES MADE BY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, TRADE & INNOVATION COMMITTEE (Recommended Substitute): Specifies that the one-half of 1 percent funds allocated for expenditure by the Washington Service Corps will be for minor public works. Minor public works are defined as construction or restoration projects such as improvement of parks, playgrounds, recreational facilities; restoration of forests, shorelines, and streams; painting and small repairs of public facilities; and other projects that do not involve work that requires a license or certification. Clarifies that public work does not include minor public works as defined in the WA Service Corps statute.

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 on Original Bill: PRO: Lots of city and county infrastructure is falling apart. We need to reach down to people with fewer skills and give them work. Grays Harbor County has 14 percent unemployment. This prioritizes rural areas because they don't have as good a safety net as urban areas.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Hargrove, prime sponsor.