

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2017

As Passed House:
February 11, 2014

Title: An act relating to changing the deadline for notices of nonrenewal of contracts for certificated school employees.

Brief Description: Changing the deadline for notices of nonrenewal of contracts for certificated school employees.

Sponsors: Representatives Parker, Lytton, Santos, Magendanz and Fagan.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Education: 1/15/14, 1/22/14 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 4/28/13, 92-4.

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 2/11/14, 94-4.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Provides that if the Omnibus Appropriations Act has not passed the Legislature by the end of the regular legislative session, school districts and Educational Service Districts have until June 15 to send contract nonrenewal notices to certificated employees.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 19 members: Representatives Santos, Chair; Stonier, Vice Chair; Dahlquist, Ranking Minority Member; Magendanz, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Bergquist, Fey, Haigh, Hargrove, Hawkins, Hayes, S. Hunt, Klippert, Lytton, Muri, Orwall, Parker, Pollet, Seaquist and Warnick.

Staff: Barbara McLain (786-7383).

Background:

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.

Certificated employees of school districts and Educational Service Districts (ESDs) must be employed under a contract of no more than one year in length. If the employing district determines that the employment contract should not be renewed for the following year, the district must notify the employee in writing on or before May 15 preceding the beginning of the next school year. The notice must be provided in person, sent by certified or registered mail, or delivered to the employee's home.

However, if the Omnibus Appropriations Act (Act) has not passed the Legislature by May 15, then the employing district has until June 15 to provide the required notice of contract nonrenewal. This notice must occur regardless of the reason for the contract nonrenewal, including for reasons of enrollment decline or loss of revenue. If notice is not provided according to these requirements, the employee is presumed to have been re-employed under the same terms and conditions for the following year.

During odd-numbered years, the regular 105-day legislative session ends during the third week of April, generally around April 22 to April 25. During even-numbered years, the regular 60-day legislative session ends during the second week of March, generally around March 10 to March 14.

Summary of Bill:

School districts and the ESDs have until June 15 to send contract nonrenewal notices to certificated employees if the Act has not passed the Legislature by the end of the regular legislative session, rather than if the Act has not passed by May 15.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) This bill is a high priority for school districts. The hope is that it will increase morale and decrease the instability that occurs when the Legislature runs into overtime. Certainty is important for recruiting teachers. This issue came to the forefront during the recession when the Legislature was faced with horrible decisions about funding. School districts were facing having to lay off staff due to budget reductions. If the nonrenewal notification is moved to June 15, districts will have a better idea of their financial situation. One suggestion is to change the notification to 30 days after June 15, if the Legislature is not finished by that time. One of the concerns with the May 15 date is that the Legislature could enact a budget on May 14, giving districts no time to react. The clarity of having a specific date is important.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Parker, prime sponsor; Lucinda Young, Washington Education Association; Marie Sullivan, Washington State School Directors' Association; and Dan Steele, Washington Association of School Administrators.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.