

SENATE BILL REPORT

HB 2450

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Health Care, February 27, 2014

Title: An act relating to enhancing the employment of persons with disabilities.

Brief Description: Concerning employment of persons with disabilities.

Sponsors: Representatives Haigh, MacEwen, S. Hunt, Santos and Freeman.

Brief History: Passed House: 2/11/14, 93-5.

Committee Activity: Health Care: 2/25/14, 2/27/14 [DPA].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH CARE

Majority Report: Do pass as amended.

Signed by Senators Becker, Chair; Dammeier, Vice Chair; Pedersen, Ranking Member; Angel, Bailey, Cleveland and Parlette.

Staff: Kathleen Buchli (786-7488)

Background: On May 22, 2013, Governor Inslee signed Executive Order 13-02 relating to improving employment opportunities and outcomes for people with disabilities in state employment. The order directed state government to adopt the goal that by June 30, 2017, 5 percent of the state workforce must be comprised of persons living with a disability. The Office of Financial Management (OFM) must continue to establish new goals until parity is reached with the available workforce. OFM must convene a taskforce to assist state agencies with recruitment and retention of persons with disabilities. The taskforce must provide recommendations to state agencies on how to achieve the employment targets and guidance on recruitment, retention, accommodation, and accessibility for persons with disabilities. Private sector companies must be included to share best practices to boost employment of people with disabilities in all parts of the state.

Each executive cabinet agency, board, and commission must ensure each agency develops an annual employment plan to address underrepresentation of people with disabilities, designate a disability employment coordinator, and participate in the state's supported employment program. OFM must oversee development and implementation of policies, strategies, and services to ensure successful implementation of the executive order. This includes developing policies on reasonable accommodation of people with disabilities, training for

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supervisors and employees, annual employment plans and reports for addressing underrepresentation of people with disabilities, and participation in the supported employment program.

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) within the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) assists people with disabilities who want to work but face barriers in finding or keeping a job. DVR provides individualized employment services and counseling to people with disabilities and technical assistance and training to employers about the employment of people with disabilities. DVR services are based on available funds and DVR maintains a waitlist for services. Priority of services are given to those with the most significant disabilities; first priority is given to those individuals with the most significant disabilities, and second priority to individuals with severe disabilities.

Summary of Bill (Recommended Amendments): Agencies employing 100 or more people must submit an annual report to OFM, with copies to DSHS, the Department of Services for the Blind, and the Governor's Committee on Disabilities and Employment. The report must include information on the previous fiscal year, including the number of employees, the number classified as individuals with disabilities, the number of employees that separated from the state agency and the number hired, the number of DVR and Department of Services for the Blind clients who were hired, anticipated hires for the current fiscal year, and opportunities for DVR clients leading to permanent employment.

EFFECT OF CHANGES MADE BY HEALTH CARE COMMITTEE (Recommended Amendments): The report requirements apply to agencies employing 100 or more people, rather than 30 or more. The report must be annual, submitted on a schedule determined by OFM, and include data from the prior fiscal year. The Department of Services for the Blind must be provided with the report and its clients must be included in the data collected by the report. Rather than reporting individuals classified as disabled, the report must include those individuals who self-identify as disabled.

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 House Bill: PRO: People with disabilities want to work. This bill is another step in opening doors to helping people to work.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Emily Rogers, Self Advocates in Leadership.