

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6519

As Passed Senate, February 17, 2014

Title: An act relating to the reporting of public school employees' insurance benefits.

Brief Description: Concerning public school employees' insurance benefits reporting.

Sponsors: Senators Litzow, Hobbs, Keiser and McAuliffe.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Health Care: 2/06/14 [DP].

Passed Senate: 2/17/14, 40-8.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH CARE

Majority Report: Do pass.

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

Staff: Mich'l Needham (786-7442)

Background: The 2012 Legislature passed ESSB 5940 which was in regard to health benefits provided to school district employees. The Office of Insurance Commissioner (OIC) must collect detailed enrollment and financial information from school districts and health insurance carriers on the health benefit plans purchased by 295 school districts.

OIC must report to the Legislature annually, beginning December 1, 2013, with summary level information. The first report submitted in December includes a summary indicating there were 408 health plans purchased for 104,431 employees, or 211,053 total members including dependents, with combined premiums totaling \$1.04 billion for 2012.

Additional reports are required from the Health Care Authority (HCA), June 1, 2015, and the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee (JLARC), December 31, 2015. The agencies must complete detailed analyses of the school district purchasing and the claims data that are not available from the summary report. The data, information, and documents submitted to OIC are protected from public disclosure, and additional federal data protections have been applied. There have been concerns about sharing the data with HCA since the bill did not provide specific protections for the data in HCA.

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.

Summary of Bill: OIC must share all data, information, and documents collected for the health benefit study with HCA. The data, information, and documents provided to HCA by OIC, a school district, a health plan providing school district benefits, or JLARC are exempt from public disclosure.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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: In 2012 we worked hard on the K-12 benefit discussions and the required data collection so the Legislature can have data on the health benefits that are being purchased for school employees. OIC has collected data from school districts and insurance carriers but there have been concerns about sharing the data with HCA. This bill ensures the Legislature can get the analysis of the data that the 2012 legislation called for.

CON: The reporting requirement includes data down to the school district level and it could be too easy to identify confidential data for employees in small districts. The federal law requires us to protect patient confidentiality and we must safeguard that. The list of data may also be too broad and include other information submitted to OIC, and we would like to ensure the data is not used for purposes other than the required report.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Doug Nelson, Public School Employees, WA.

CON: Sydney Zvara, Assn. of WA HealthCare Plans; Shawn Lewis, WA Education Assn.