
SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 8409

State of Washington

63rd Legislature

2014 Regular Session

By Senators Bailey, Kohl-Welles, Chase, Rivers, Frockt, Parlette, Cleveland, Dammeier, McAuliffe, Keiser, Tom, Conway, and Mullet; by request of Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board

Read first time 01/14/14. Referred to Committee on Higher Education.

1 WHEREAS, Chapter 238, Laws of 1991 created the workforce training
2 and education coordinating board (workforce board) to provide planning,
3 coordination, evaluation, and policy analysis for the state training
4 system as a whole and to provide advice to the governor and the
5 legislature concerning the training system in cooperation with the
6 agencies that comprise the state training system and the student
7 achievement council; and

8 WHEREAS, The workforce board is made up of a unique partnership of
9 business, labor, education, and training organizations dedicated to
10 addressing the needs of Washington businesses and workers; and

11 WHEREAS, The state faces the workforce challenges of: (1) An
12 increasing number of jobs that call for higher levels of education and
13 skills across a wide range of industries; and (2) Washington businesses
14 that struggle to find workers with the skills needed to fill key
15 openings, hampering their ability to be competitive in an increasingly
16 global economy; and

17 WHEREAS, RCW 28C.18.080 requires the board to update the state
18 comprehensive plan for workforce training and education, called high
19 skills high wages, every four years, and the plan was last updated in
20 2008; and

1 WHEREAS, Students, workers, and employers have many different needs
2 and requirements for workforce development. By viewing the workforce
3 system as a series of interconnected pathways, with multiple options
4 for workers and students to advance, the workforce board is able to
5 outline strategies to strengthen these pathways so more Washington
6 residents move ahead into high skill, high wage jobs, while also
7 helping employers find the skilled workers they depend on; and

8 WHEREAS, The purpose of the high skills high wages plan is to
9 provide direction to the workforce development system. To meet the
10 challenges of the next ten years, there needs to be a concerted effort
11 on the part of all workforce system partners; and

12 WHEREAS, The workforce board used an inclusive process of work
13 groups, public hearings, and contact with workers and businesses to
14 develop agreement on the strategies identified in the high skills high
15 wages plan, and the workforce board secured the unanimous endorsement
16 of critical constituencies, including business, labor, and the agencies
17 delivering workforce services; and

18 WHEREAS, This update of the high skills high wages plan takes a new
19 look at chronic challenges and approaches common issues with a fresh
20 eye; and

21 WHEREAS, The state comprehensive plan has a ten-year horizon
22 through 2022, and focuses on the following strategic opportunities:

23 (1) Multiple pathways for initial careers: The multiple pathways
24 approach expands beyond the traditional education experience to
25 heighten a student's understanding of career opportunities, as well as
26 the student's perception of how classroom learning relates to the world
27 of work. This goal will be accomplished by:

28 (a) Improving availability and quality of career and education
29 guidance for students in middle school, high school, and postsecondary
30 institutions. The high skills high wages plan recommends beginning
31 career guidance at an earlier age, involving parents and guardians, and
32 valuing all career paths.

33 (b) Identifying, assessing, and certifying skills for successful
34 careers by increasing workplace and life skills development for
35 students, and encouraging the use of industry-based skill standards,
36 assessments, and credentials.

37 (c) Expanding programs of study that bring together a sequence of

1 career-focused courses that start in high school and extend through
2 college, and improving the transfer of credits earned in a student's
3 program of study.

4 (d) Increasing the number and types of workplace experiences
5 available to students and out-of-school youth.

6 (e) Addressing student access and retention by expanding high
7 school dropout prevention and retrieval programs, increasing
8 nontraditional opportunities to obtain postsecondary certificates and
9 degrees, and providing new models of support and employment services,
10 including special services for diverse populations with multiple
11 barriers to education and training.

12 (f) Prioritizing job search and placement for people into first
13 careers by strengthening partnerships between the education and
14 worksource systems to share job finding information and resources that
15 teach students job search skills.

16 (2) Multiple pathways for employers and workers that increase
17 engagement in education and workforce training and better connect
18 workers with high-wage careers and life-long learning. This goal will
19 be accomplished by:

20 (a) Increasing employer engagement with the workforce development
21 system by improving outreach to employers through the use of materials
22 designed and written with a business audience in mind, engaging
23 employers in identifying skill standards and developing training
24 programs that meet their needs, and increasing industry involvement in
25 work-integrated learning and workforce training.

26 (b) Promoting economic development by connecting workforce
27 development with job creation and growth. Encourage investing in
28 strategic economic opportunities and continue to develop and maintain
29 special initiatives to address critical state and local economic
30 opportunities.

31 (c) Expanding and supporting learning opportunities for workers at
32 all stages of their education or career paths.

33 (d) Improving job search and placement services for unemployed and
34 underemployed workers by addressing the quality and speed of job
35 matching and referrals between job seekers and employers with job
36 openings, and making job search and placement assistance more widely
37 known and available.

1 (3) Washington's workforce development system is a model of
2 accountability and efficient coinvestment. The high skills high wages
3 plan calls for improvements to the efficiency, transparency, and
4 performance of Washington's workforce system to ensure that all aspects
5 and components of the system work together effectively to meet the
6 needs of job seekers and employers. This goal will be accomplished by:

7 (a) Strengthening performance accountability across all workforce
8 development partners by focusing on employment and earnings outcomes.

9 (b) Establishing cost-effective coinvestment models across
10 government funding streams and across the tri-partite spectrum of
11 employers, workers, and the government. Reducing barriers to sharing
12 or splitting funding across funding streams, and establishing cost-
13 sharing practices and policies that stretch public dollars to serve the
14 largest number of participants and attain the highest performance
15 outcome levels; and

16 WHEREAS, The provisions of the comprehensive plan and updates that
17 are approved by the legislature become the state's workforce policy
18 unless legislation is enacted to alter the policies set forth therein;

19 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the Senate of the State of
20 Washington, the House of Representatives concurring, hereby approve the
21 state comprehensive plan for workforce training called "High Skills,
22 High Wages."

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