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**SENATE BILL 6431**

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**State of Washington 64th Legislature 2016 Regular Session**

**By** Senators Mullet, Litzow, Billig, and Fain

AN ACT Relating to maternity and paternity leave for K-12 teachers; creating new sections; and providing an expiration date.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  The legislature finds that the state is currently facing a teacher shortage crisis, with evidence showing that teachers are leaving the profession at an unprecedented rate. Additionally, the legislature notes that recent studies by the professional educator standards board show that beginning teacher retention in Washington follows the national pattern, with roughly half of new teachers leaving the profession in the first five years. As the state continues to implement class size reductions, the ability to attract and retain quality educators remains a critical component for successfully implementing ongoing educational reforms and increasing student achievement. The legislature understands that there are multiple complex issues behind the current teacher shortage and retention problem and that many factors are often interrelated. It is the intent of the legislature to examine expanding family leave policies as one possible policy choice that could make the teaching profession more attractive in order to recruit promising new students into the profession and keep our existing high quality teachers in the classroom.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  (1) The joint legislative audit and review committee shall conduct an analysis of the costs and impacts associated with maternity and paternity leave for K-12 certificated classroom teachers. The analysis must include:

(a) The projected costs associated with implementing and maintaining a maternity and paternity leave program including, but not limited to, the projected number of K-12 certificated classroom teachers who would participate in a maternity and paternity leave program annually; and

(b) A comparison of how other states have implemented similar programs for K-12 employees including, but not limited to, the costs associated with implementing and maintaining a maternity and paternity leave program, the amount of maternity or paternity leave allotted for each employee, and the allowable benefit period of maternity or paternity leave.

(2) The joint legislative audit and review committee, with assistance from the Washington state institute for public policy, shall additionally analyze the impact of state-funded maternity and paternity leave on increasing recruitment and retention of teachers.

(3) To the extent data is not available at the statewide level, the joint legislative audit and review committee may use case studies or other methods to conduct the analysis.

(4) The joint legislative audit and review committee must submit a report of its findings to the appropriate senate committees by January 1, 2017.

(5) This section expires August 1, 2017.

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