

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SHB 1636

As Passed House:
March 3, 2015

Title: An act relating to disability employment reporting by state agencies.

Brief Description: Requiring disability employment reporting by state agencies.

Sponsors: House Committee on State Government (originally sponsored by Representatives MacEwen and Griffey).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

State Government: 2/10/15, 2/19/15 [DPS].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 3/3/15, 97-0.

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Requires state agencies with 100 or more employees to file an annual report to the Office of Financial Management regarding information on the number of persons with disabilities employed.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 7 members: Representatives S. Hunt, Chair; Bergquist, Vice Chair; Holy, Ranking Minority Member; Van Werven, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Appleton, Gregory and Hawkins.

Staff: Sean Flynn (786-7124).

Background:

There are several state programs that address vocational rehabilitation for persons with disabilities.

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.

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) is an agency within the Department of Social and Health Services that provides a statewide program of services to disabled persons that support self-sufficiency, job opportunities, and community integration. The Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) also assists individuals with developmental disabilities and their families to obtain services and support based on individual preference, capabilities, and needs.

The Department of Services for the Blind (DSB) operates the Vocational Rehabilitation Program (Program) to provide services that help blind persons overcome barriers and develop skills necessary for employment and independence. The Program must ensure that the services provided to eligible persons meet the requirements of the federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

In 2013 the Governor issued Executive Order 13-02, which established a goal for state government that by 2017, 5 percent of the state work force will be comprised of people living with a disability. The Executive Order also directed the Office of Financial Management (OFM) to convene the Disability Employment Task Force to assist state agencies with recruiting and retaining disabled persons and engage the private sector to help increase opportunities for disabled persons in all employment sectors.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

State agencies with 100 or more employees must submit an annual report including the total number of employees in the previous year, and the number of employees classified as disabled. Agency reports also must include:

- the total number employees hired and separated in the past year, including the number of employees hired from the DVR and from the DSB;
- the total number of planned hires for the current year; and
- opportunities for internships for DVR, DDA, and DSB client placements leading to entry-level positions.

Each agency must submit its report to the OFM human resource director, with copies sent to the DVR and the Governor's Disability Employment Task Force by January 31 of each year.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) This bill helps persons with disabilities to access the state work force and to identify work force opportunities within the state. Many agencies do not respond to requests or applications from persons with disabilities. The Governor's executive order work group has provided some good groundwork in this issue. This bill will complement the efforts of the work group. The DDA should be included in these programs.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative MacEwen, prime sponsor; Lawrence Jacobson; and Marcie Taylor, Community Employment Alliance.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.