

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 1636

As of March 24, 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: Passed House: 3/03/15, 97-0.

Committee Activity: Government Operations & Security: 3/24/15.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS & SECURITY

Staff: Karen Epps (786-7424)

Background: Governor Inslee issued Executive Order 13-02 in May 2013, 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 supervisors and employees, annual employment plans and reports for addressing underrepresentation of people with disabilities, and participation in the supported employment program.

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) within the Department of Social and Health Services 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. 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 a vocational rehabilitation program to provide services that help blind persons overcome barriers and develop skills necessary for employment and independence.

Summary of Bill: Agencies employing 100 or more people must submit an annual report to the Human Resources Director at OFM, with copies to DVR and the Governor's Disability Employment Task Force. The report must include information from the previous calendar 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 DSB clients who were hired, as well as the number of planned hires for the current fiscal year, and opportunities for DVR, DDA, and DSB clients leading to permanent employment for the current year.

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: PRO: This bill is needed to help people with disabilities. People with disabilities are not getting interviews. These folks are good workers. Developing reliable baseline measures and monitoring the changes to those baseline measures over time is the essential foundation for an effort to improve performance. This bill will do that for state agencies. The Governor's Task Force is developing a public/private partnership and is bringing in the leaders in employment with disabilities to develop and put forward strategies. Under the work of the Task Force, the trends that are reported in the findings section of this bill have started to turn around and there are improvements in representation of people with disabilities in state government.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Seth Dawson, Community Employment Alliance; Toby Olson, Governor's Committee on Disability Issues and Employment; Lawrence Jacobson, citizen.

Persons Signed in to Testify But Not Testifying: No one.