

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1303

As Reported by House Committee On:
Human Services & Early Learning
Appropriations

Title: An act relating to improving access and completion for students at institutions of higher education, especially at community and technical colleges, by removing restrictions on subsidized child care.

Brief Description: Removing certain restrictions on subsidized child care for students at institutions of higher education.

Sponsors: Representatives Shewmake, Eslick, Pollet, Griffey, Riccelli, Senn, Appleton, Dolan, Frame, Paul, Goodman, Robinson, Springer, Lekanoff, Macri, Thai, Tharinger, Stanford, Bergquist, Jinkins, Leavitt and Ormsby.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Human Services & Early Learning: 1/29/19, 2/1/19 [DPS];
Appropriations: 2/20/19, 2/28/19 [DP2S(w/o sub HSEL)].

Brief Summary of Second Substitute Bill

- Directs the Department of Children, Youth, and Families to exempt certain full-time students from work requirements for Working Connections Child Care program benefits.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES & EARLY LEARNING

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 13 members: Representatives Senn, Chair; Callan, Vice Chair; Frame, Vice Chair; Dent, Ranking Minority Member; Eslick, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; McCaslin, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Corry, Goodman, Griffey, Kilduff, Klippert, Lovick and Ortiz-Self.

Staff: Dawn Eychaner (786-7135).

Background:

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.

Working Connections Child Care.

The Working Connections Child Care (WCCC) program is a subsidized child care program for low-income families that is funded through federal Child Care and Development Funds (CCDF), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and state general funds. In state fiscal year 2017, approximately 13 percent of participating WCCC program households were also TANF recipients.

To be eligible, an applicant must have a household income at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty guideline at the time of application and be engaged in approved work activities unless the family has received child welfare, child protective, or family assessment response (FAR) services in the previous six months. Historically, the average monthly caseload of the WCCC program has been capped in the state operating budget at 33,000 households.

The Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) is the designated lead agency for administration of the CCDF program and sets policy for the WCCC program. The Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) determines eligibility for the WCCC program and authorizes the amount of care a consumer may receive. Effective July 1, 2019, all duties related to the WCCC program will transfer from the DSHS to the DCYF.

WorkFirst.

The TANF program is funded by a federal block grant that provides temporary cash assistance, subsidized childcare, and work programs for families. The Washington WorkFirst TANF Act of 1997 created the WorkFirst program. With limited exceptions, adult TANF recipients must participate in one or more WorkFirst activities that are identified in the participant's Individual Responsibility Plan (IRP). These activities may include paid and unpaid employment-based training programs, career development, community service, work skills assessment and job hunting training, and vocational training programs.

A person participating in WorkFirst may be eligible for WCCC benefits for approved activities in his or her IRP.

Working Connections Child Care for Students.

A consumer who is not participating in WorkFirst and is under the age of 22 may be eligible for the WCCC program for high school or a General Educational Development (GED) program without a minimum number of work hours. A consumer who is age 22 or older must work either an average of 20 or more hours per week of unsubsidized employment or an average of 16 or more hours per week in a paid federal or state work study program.

There is a lifetime limit of 24 months of WCCC benefits for participation in adult basic education, English as a second language, or high school or GED completion. Vocational education benefits are limited to 36 months in a consumer's lifetime for participation in vocational education. The vocational education program must lead to a degree or certificate in a specific occupation and be offered by a public or private technical college or school, a community college, or a tribal college.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

By January 1, 2020, the DCYF may not require an applicant or consumer who is a single parent and a full-time community, technical, or tribal college student to meet work requirements as a condition of receiving WCCC benefits. The student must be maintaining passing grades and be in good standing pursuant to the college attendance requirements. A student who is otherwise qualified to receive WCCC benefits may be pursuing any associate degree program and receive benefits.

In the event of a waitlist for the WCCC, no changes are intended to be made regarding how applicants are prioritized as a result of eliminating work requirements for students. A community or technical college is not required to expand any of its existing child care facilities, and any additional child care services provided by a community or technical college must be provided within existing resources and existing facilities.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The substitute bill makes the following changes:

- The requirement for the DCYF to consult with the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges and the Student Achievement Council to revise rules related to WCCC work requirements for students is removed.
- The qualifying criteria by which a full-time student is exempt from WCCC work requirements is changed to include any student who is otherwise eligible and who is:
 - a single parent;
 - maintaining passing grades; and
 - in good standing pursuant to the college attendance requirements.
- The limitation applying the exemption to non WorkFirst participants only is removed.
- A student pursuing any associate degree program, who is otherwise qualified, may receive WCCC benefits.
- Language specifying the act does not create an entitlement is removed.
- Language specifying that a community or technical college is not required to expand any of its existing child care facilities or provide additional child care services outside of existing resources is added.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 23, 2019.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) Research shows that working more than 15 hours per week threatens the ability of a student parent to succeed. Washington is one of only two states that has a 20-hour work requirement for students to access subsidized child care. These policy changes are about

supporting kids and parents and also about good economics. Twenty-three percent of all community and technical college students in Washington are parents. Parents who use child care are almost three times as likely to graduate and pursue a four-year college degree. Work requirements and degree restrictions are preventing people from going back to school and accessing child care, resulting in parents being stuck in dead-end jobs.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Shewmake, prime sponsor; Melissa Johnson, Washington State Association of Head Start and Early Childhood Education Assistance Program; Ashley Mucino; John Hurley, Kitsap Community Resources; and Emily Murphy, Children's Alliance.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Majority Report: The second substitute bill be substituted therefor and the second substitute bill do pass and do not pass the substitute bill by Committee on Human Services & Early Learning. Signed by 26 members: Representatives Ormsby, Chair; Bergquist, 2nd Vice Chair; Robinson, 1st Vice Chair; Stokesbary, Ranking Minority Member; Rude, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Caldier, Cody, Dolan, Fitzgibbon, Hansen, Hoff, Hudgins, Jinkins, Macri, Mosbrucker, Pettigrew, Pollet, Ryu, Senn, Springer, Stanford, Steele, Sullivan, Sutherland, Tarleton and Tharinger.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 6 members: Representatives MacEwen, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Chandler, Dye, Kraft, Schmick and Ybarra.

Staff: Kelci Karl-Robinson (786-7116).

Summary of Recommendation of Committee On Appropriations Compared to Recommendation of Committee On Human Services & Early Learning:

The requirement that a full-time student must be a single parent in order to be exempted from work requirements for Working Connections Child Care (WCCC) benefits is removed. The work exemption is limited to student parents who are pursuing certificates in nursing, early childhood education, a mental health profession, or paraeducation. The work exemption policy begins August 1, 2020, rather than January 1, 2020. The provision allowing a student pursuing any associate degree program, who is otherwise qualified, to receive WCCC benefits is removed. A null and void clause is added, making the bill null and void unless funded in the budget.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date of Second Substitute Bill: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed. However, the bill is null and void unless funded in the budget.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) Over 47,000 community and technical college students in Washington are parents. Research shows that child care assists parents in completing college programs. Washington's requirement that student parents work 20 hours per week is one of the most restrictive in the country. Thirty-nine states, including Alaska and Idaho, do not require any work requirements for student parents. Due to work requirements, over half of all student parents are not completing a degree within six years. In addition, Washington is one of the most restrictive states in limiting the type of degrees that student parents may pursue. Washington students receiving child care subsidies are not allowed to pursue an Associate of Art's degree. Student parents' access to an early childhood education degree will assist in addressing the early childhood workforce shortage. The legislation can be funded with the Working Connections Child Care caseload savings. This bill will remove barriers to access to higher education for lower-income families with young children. It is unknown how many of the student parents have younger children and need child care subsidy, which may lower the fiscal impact of this bill. Basic Food Employment and Training program students who are not required to work are doing better in completing their education than the students that are required to work as a part of the WorkFirst program. Parents who obtain a higher level of education are more likely to have children that complete higher education.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Melissa Johnson, Washington State Association of Head Start & Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program; Emily Murphy, Children's Alliance; and Erin Frasier, Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.