

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5203

As of February 4, 2019

Title: An act relating to increasing opportunities for apprenticeships for inmates.

Brief Description: Creating an apprenticeship program for inmates.

Sponsors: Senators Palumbo, Wagoner, Nguyen, Mullet, Carlyle, Hunt, Das, Randall and Wellman.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Human Services, Reentry & Rehabilitation: 1/29/19.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires the secretary of the Department of Corrections to annually award a nongovernmental agency \$100,000 to establish an apprenticeship opportunity pilot program at the Monroe Correctional Complex.
- Requires the nongovernmental agency partner to provide former inmates with the requisite tools and other support services to increase the likelihood of completing their apprenticeships, and track certain information regarding the participating inmate for two years after release.
- Expires the act January 1, 2024.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES, REENTRY & REHABILITATION

Staff: Keri Waterland (786-7490)

Background: The Department of Corrections (DOC) provides vocational programs developing marketable job skills and instilling a positive work ethic for offenders. Offenders are referred for vocational programming based on their current job skills, expected stay in the facility, previous work experience, and risk to reoffend.

Job-search and at least two vocational programs are available at each DOC prison. Vocational programs include auto body; auto mechanics; baking, building maintenance; business; carpentry; computer numerical control machining; composites; computer programming; cosmetology; diesel mechanics; drywall; graphic design; green building;

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horticulture; heating, ventilation, and air conditioning; institutional sanitation; pre-apprenticeship; roofing and siding; technical design; upholstery; and welding.

DOC also currently, or have historically offered Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training (IBEST), composites manufacturing at Airway Heights Corrections Center, auto mechanics at Coyote Ridge Corrections Center, and auto body and diesel mechanics at the Washington State Penitentiary. IBEST allows a student to pursue a GED while also receiving a one-year vocational certificate.

The Washington State Institute for Public Policy reported in 2016 that the rate of return for every one dollar invested is \$12.12 for vocational programs while incarcerated.

Summary of Bill: The Legislature finds providing quality training, employment navigation, and supportive employment services helps former inmates lead successful family wage careers post-release, and inmates who participate in vocational training are 28 percent more likely to be employed than those who do not. The Legislature finds that vocational training programs are a cost-effective investment in workforce development costs as compared to re-incarceration.

The secretary shall award a nongovernmental agency \$100,000 annually to establish an apprenticeship opportunity pilot program at the Monroe Correctional Complex until December 31, 2023.

The selected nongovernmental agency must be experienced with pre-apprenticeship training and employment navigation, and shall provide former inmates with the requisite tools and other support services to increase the likelihood the former inmate will complete their apprenticeships. The nongovernmental agency shall ensure the apprenticeship opportunity pilot program will help former inmates complete pre-apprenticeship training, as well as provide the training, employment navigation, and support services needed to help inmates enter and succeed in apprenticeship programs.

The nongovernmental agency must track participant inmate information for two years after release, including:

- wage;
- employment history and pattern, including monthly checks of whether the former inmate continues to be employed;
- apprenticeship retention;
- recidivism; and
- a stability chart that includes the participating inmate's geographical city, housing, food security, and transportation.

By December 31, 2023, DOC shall report to the Legislature on the effectiveness of the apprenticeship opportunity pilot program, including an analysis of data collected by the nongovernmental agency.

This act expires January 1, 2024.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: OTHER: We are supportive of the intent of this bill, and believe that this is similar to something that DOC already does, with the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC), and is happening at Washington Corrections Center for Women for the trades related apprenticeship coaching. We are concerned because without funding this will come out of our educational budget if it is not funded. Six facilities are currently starting pre-apprenticeship programs at six facilities through a partnership with the SBCTC. We believe that this is slightly different because it is for inmates outside of facilities.

Persons Testifying: OTHER: Alex MacBain, Department of Corrections.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.