

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 2019

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Higher Education & Workforce Development, February 24, 2022

Title: An act relating to increasing educational and training opportunities for careers in retail.

Brief Description: Increasing educational and training opportunities for careers in retail.

Sponsors: House Committee on College & Workforce Development (originally sponsored by Representatives Boehnke, Graham, Johnson, J., Leavitt and Sutherland).

Brief History: Passed House: 2/2/22, 94-2.

Committee Activity: Higher Education & Workforce Development: 2/22/22, 2/24/22 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board (Workforce Board), with certain stakeholders, to identify certain skills and educational needs and gaps for retail workers.
- Requires the Workforce Board and certain stakeholders to make recommendations to the Legislature on developing credentials, and creating educational and career opportunities, for retail workers.
- Requires the Workforce Board to submit reports to the Legislature.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Randall, Chair; Nobles, Vice Chair; Holy, Ranking Member; Liias and Sefzik.

Staff: Kellee Gunn (786-7429)

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Background: Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board. The Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board (Workforce Board) was created in 1991 to provide planning, coordination, evaluation, monitoring, and policy analysis for the state workforce training system, and to advise the Governor and the Legislature concerning the training system. It is a tripartite partnership of business, labor, and government with a Governor-appointed board of 11 members.

National Retail Federation Foundation's RISE Up. RISE Up is a training and credentialing program that provides foundational employability skills to assist people in getting hired and promoted in the retail industry. The curriculum and exams are industry-recognized and were developed in collaboration with 20 retailers. RISE Up offers four credentials—retail industry fundamentals; customer service and sales; business of retail; and warehouse, inventory, and logistics.

Summary of Bill: The Workforce Board, in consultation with the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) and statewide retail employer organizations shall identify:

- core skills needed for employment in the retail industry;
- existing courses, educational pathways, and apprenticeships for students and entry-level job seekers to gain the identified core skills;
- educational gaps for retail workers; and
- in-demand, high-wage, industry professions within the retail industry.

The Workforce Board and others must also map educational pathways for job advancement in retail.

With certain stakeholder participation, information gathered by the Workforce Board shall be used to make recommendations to the Legislature. Recommendations must include certain strategies to develop credentials for retail employees, building networks for job seekers and students completing retail certification courses, options for partnering with retail employers to upskill frontline retail positions, and options for increasing the number of opportunities in the industry for underserved communities and previously incarcerated individuals.

The Workforce Board must submit two reports to the Legislature—a progress report by December 1, 2022, and a final report with recommendations by December 1, 2023. The requirements expire July 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: PRO: The retail industry is being left behind. There is a need to help an industry that was one of those that was hit the hardest by the pandemic. This bill was developed over the interim. Our goal is to develop strategies and engage with the industry to increase opportunities for individuals in the retail workforce. Retail is the fourth largest employer of immigrants and provides nearly half of the state's revenue. Sixty-two percent of managers in retail start from within. Customer service skills are important across sectors, systems, and communities. This bill will open opportunities for all retail employees. As a high school student in Florida, while working in retail, I was able to be a part of program that helped me learn, grow, and get through college. Customer service experience is so important as it provides skills and tools that are useful in the workforce. We are experiencing a labor shortage right now. Anything that can get people interested in retail as a career would help the economy. There are many opportunities for growth in this sector. Creating strategies to ensure Washington has a workforce that can keep pace with technology and the economy is important to the SBCTC.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Representative Matt Boehnke, Prime Sponsor; ROSE GUNDERSEN, Washington Retail Association; Cristina Mateo, WA Build Back Black Alliance - (WBBA); Carolyn Logue, Washington Food Industry Association; Carolyn McKinnon, SBCTC.

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