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**HOUSE BILL 1872**

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**State of Washington**

**67th Legislature**

**2022 Regular Session**

**By** Representatives Senn, Slatter, Berry, Leavitt, Santos, Sells, Simmons, Bronoske, Shewmake, Taylor, Chopp, Ramel, Callan, Riccelli, Lekanoff, Bateman, Macri, Harris-Talley, Valdez, Duerr, and Pollet

Read first time 01/11/22. Referred to Committee on College & Workforce Development.

1 AN ACT Relating to establishing the care worker center to promote  
2 caregiving professions; adding a new section to chapter 28C.18 RCW;  
3 and creating a new section.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** (1) The legislature recognizes that care  
6 workers provide support to others who are not able to fully care for  
7 themselves or live independently without support, fulfilling a  
8 critical and essential industry. Care workers are paid to support  
9 individuals in their homes, in the community, in the workplace, and  
10 in classroom settings. By providing support to an individual or a  
11 small group in need of care, these care workers improve the lives of  
12 the recipients by attending to their specific needs, assisting them  
13 with their daily tasks, and when possible, helping them to transition  
14 to higher levels of independence and community engagement. Care  
15 workers work with children, the elderly, people with disabilities,  
16 and others with significant barriers. The legislature identifies the  
17 importance of having a diverse care worker workforce that reflects  
18 the diversity of the recipients receiving care as this positively  
19 impacts patient care, educational outcomes, and service for  
20 historically underrepresented and marginalized groups.

1 (2) The legislature also recognizes that the need for paid care  
2 workers is expected to grow over the next 20 years, only adding to  
3 the existing and looming crisis of workforce shortages. These jobs  
4 cannot be internationally outsourced and there will always be a need  
5 for care workers. Addressing language and cultural barriers in these  
6 professions is a place where the state can make headway in  
7 communication with, recruiting from, and meeting the unique needs of  
8 diverse communities' cultures and languages.

9 (3) The legislature also recognizes that care workers are among  
10 some of the lowest paid professions in the labor market. Currently,  
11 these positions offer little room for economic advancement and rarely  
12 offer employee benefits. Additionally, care worker schedules can be  
13 unpredictable, making it difficult to supplement income with other  
14 jobs or to go to school to prepare for higher paid employment  
15 opportunities. Erratic schedules and low incomes can also burden  
16 families and cause chaos to home and family life. This historically  
17 low pay and limited access to benefits discourages many people from  
18 entering and remaining in the field, which has been exacerbated by  
19 the COVID-19 pandemic. Thus, improvements in career progression and  
20 advancement opportunities are essential to attracting and retaining  
21 care workers to the field.

22 (4) It is the legislature's intent to support the career,  
23 economic, and professional success of care workers in order to  
24 improve health, safety, and social outcomes of the individuals  
25 receiving care as well as the employees. These care workers are  
26 essential to the state's economy and the population's well-being.  
27 Therefore, the legislature is establishing the care worker center to  
28 help promote career pathways, provide research and marketing to  
29 support recruitment, make recommendations for strategies to  
30 streamline education pathways and increase access to coursework, and  
31 identify and promote support services for care workers.

32 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 28C.18  
33 RCW to read as follows:

34 (1) The board shall establish a care worker center with the  
35 purpose of elevating care workers as a respected sector of the  
36 workforce, increasing retention and recruitment into care worker  
37 fields, and promoting the value and different employment options of a  
38 care worker. The board shall establish the care worker center as an  
39 online central portal of knowledge, research, resources, and best

1 practices for care workers to be used by care workers, employers,  
2 high school counselors, postsecondary education and training  
3 providers, and policymakers.

4 (2) The care worker center shall initially focus on three  
5 caregiving professions: Child care, long-term care, and personal care  
6 attendants for people with disabilities. Within the first two years  
7 of establishment, the board shall set up the care worker center with  
8 staff and an online portal, conduct an introductory marketing  
9 campaign, and work with appropriate state, private, labor, and  
10 community stakeholders involved with child care or long-term care for  
11 people with disabilities or older adults to fulfill the duties of the  
12 care worker center.

13 (3) As administrators of the care worker center, the board, in  
14 consultation with care worker stakeholders and agencies holding  
15 administrative authority over the various elements of workforce  
16 education and training, financial aid, workforce development, and  
17 occupational licensing and regulation, shall have the following  
18 duties for the care worker center:

19 (a) Establish an online resource center linking care workers to  
20 information about free and low-cost services or other resources to  
21 support the well-being of care workers and their families;

22 (b) Identify similarities and differences across care worker  
23 occupations, including commonalities across licensing requirements,  
24 to facilitate worker mobility across care worker professions;

25 (c) Research and analyze labor force data on the various care  
26 worker sectors, including educational output and expected job  
27 vacancies;

28 (d) Track turnover rates and conduct surveys to better understand  
29 the reasons why care workers remain in the occupation, why care  
30 workers leave the occupation, and ideas for increasing care worker  
31 retention;

32 (e) Maintain a searchable repository of research and periodically  
33 disseminate summaries of latest findings;

34 (f) Perform research and analysis on trends within Washington  
35 state including, but not limited to, numbers and demographics of care  
36 workers in each subfield, care workers' professional trajectories,  
37 care workers' health and longevity on the job, the outcomes and  
38 impacts that care worker interventions have on recipients of care,  
39 income and benefit trends among care workers, and impacts of care  
40 worker shortages on communities, families, and workplaces;

1 (g) Promote greater numbers of employees, better customer  
2 outcomes, increased worker retention, the value of working as a care  
3 worker, and encourage development of the care worker sector;

4 (h) Establish online career navigation resources that include  
5 links to information about career and educational guidance, benefits  
6 information, job search assistance, and referrals to services that  
7 can be used by worksorce centers, career navigators, school  
8 counselors, employment coaches, libraries, and others to assist care  
9 workers;

10 (i) Develop policy recommendations specific to maintaining,  
11 supporting, and increasing diversity, equity, and inclusion in the  
12 care worker fields. This may include additional language supports for  
13 English language learners, evidence-based practices in cultural  
14 competency in education and support materials, and exploring  
15 opportunities for career progression in care worker professions;

16 (j) Map care worker skill sets, competencies, abilities, and  
17 experiences to job progression opportunities and identify areas where  
18 additional occupational licensing categories or education and  
19 training credentials are needed in order to attain new opportunities;

20 (k) Explore opportunities and make recommendations to increase  
21 access, flexibility, and affordability of education and training for  
22 care workers;

23 (l) Administer a transformation grant pilot program to promote  
24 new care practice methods and ideas to transform the care worker  
25 sector and develop metrics and reporting mechanisms to track progress  
26 and outcomes of the transformation grants; and

27 (m) Develop, collect, and disseminate data, information, results,  
28 and best practices regarding care workers for the purpose of  
29 providing policy recommendations to facilitate care worker  
30 transformation and improve recruitment and retention.

31 (4) The board shall report to the appropriate committees of the  
32 legislature in accordance with RCW 43.01.036 by September 1st of the  
33 first year of each biennium, beginning with September 1, 2022, on the  
34 following:

35 (a) The progress of meeting the goals of the care worker center;

36 (b) The results of the transformation grant pilot program; and

37 (c) Policy and practice recommendations based on the research and  
38 data collected throughout the phases.

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