
HOUSE BILL 2019

State of Washington

67th Legislature

2022 Regular Session

By Representatives Boehnke, Graham, J. Johnson, Leavitt, and Sutherland

Read first time 01/17/22. Referred to Committee on College & Workforce Development.

1 AN ACT Relating to increasing educational and training
2 opportunities for careers in retail; adding a new section to chapter
3 28C.18 RCW; creating a new section; and providing an expiration date.

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

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** (1) The legislature finds that the retail
6 industry is vital to the state's economy, providing 42 percent of the
7 state's total tax collections in 2019, employing approximately
8 385,000 people across the state, and paying nearly \$24 billion in
9 annual wages. Nationally, one in four jobs are in retail, 34 percent
10 of the retail workforce consists of people of color, and the retail
11 industry is the fourth largest employer of immigrants.

12 (2) Workers with retail experience acquire transferrable and
13 stackable job skills needed in all industries and careers. Retail
14 work offers foundational training for strong customer service skills,
15 which is the single most essential skill employers are looking for in
16 new hires, according to research from the Washington employment
17 security department. Sixty-two percent of retail store managers
18 earned promotions through training programs that enabled them to move
19 up the ranks of the retail industry. The legislature finds that the
20 majority of retail employers in Washington are small businesses who
21 would benefit greatly from a pipeline of entry-level employees with

1 job readiness skills. A few other states have successfully adopted
2 entry-level retail customer service, retail operations, and warehouse
3 logistics courses, such as the national retail foundation's retail
4 industry skills and education certification program.

5 (3) The legislature further finds that Washington has developed
6 strong career and technical education programs and has invested in
7 career connected learning. The career connected learning cross-agency
8 work group is charged with creating work-based and academic programs
9 for young people to explore, learn, and earn money and college-level
10 credit. However, the current career and technical education clusters
11 and career connected learning programs do not adequately identify and
12 promote working in retail as a career. Although some career clusters
13 and pathways may include courses that are relevant to a career in
14 retail, there are not pathways specific to retail nor are students
15 encouraged to participate for the purpose of a career in retail.
16 Additionally, the legislature recognizes that there is a positive
17 correlation between educational opportunities available to
18 incarcerated individuals and reduced recidivism, especially when
19 incarcerated individuals participate in education and training
20 programs focused on job opportunities that are available upon
21 release.

22 (4) It is the legislature's intent to help employees be
23 successful in retail and to provide a skilled workforce for retail
24 employers by increasing and clearly identifying education and
25 training opportunities for careers in the retail industry.

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

28 (1) The board, in consultation with the state board for community
29 and technical colleges and statewide retail employer organizations,
30 shall:

31 (a) Identify core skills needed for employment in the retail
32 industry;

33 (b) Identify existing courses and educational pathways for
34 students and entry-level job seekers to gain the core skills
35 identified;

36 (c) Map educational pathways that retail workers may use to
37 pursue promotions and job advancement opportunities; and

38 (d) Identify where there are gaps in educational courses and
39 trainings for retail workers.

1 (2) The board shall use the information gathered from subsection
2 (1) of this section to engage stakeholders, including the state board
3 for community and technical colleges, the office of the
4 superintendent of public instruction, the department of corrections,
5 the employment security department, the career connected learning
6 cross-agency work group under chapter 28C.30 RCW, and statewide
7 retail employer organizations to make recommendations to the
8 legislature on the following:

9 (a) Strategies to develop additional courses and pathways to make
10 retail certifications and credentials available for job seekers and
11 current retail employees;

12 (b) Strategies to build a network for students and job seekers
13 who complete retail certification courses to connect with potential
14 employers;

15 (c) Options for engaging and partnering with retail employers to
16 provide courses to incumbent frontline workers for the purpose of
17 upskilling and promotions; and

18 (d) Options for increasing training and job opportunities in the
19 retail industry for underserved communities and previously
20 incarcerated individuals.

21 (3) The board shall report on the progress of this section to the
22 appropriate committees of the legislature in accordance with RCW
23 43.01.036 by December 1, 2022, and submit a final report with
24 recommendations by December 1, 2023.

25 (4) This section expires July 1, 2024.

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