

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2246

As Passed House:
February 12, 2024

Title: An act relating to vacation leave accrual for state employees.

Brief Description: Concerning vacation leave accrual for state employees.

Sponsors: Representatives Bateman, Low, Gregerson, Bronoske, Robertson, Reeves, Paul, Reed and Doglio.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Labor & Workplace Standards: 1/23/24, 1/30/24 [DP];

Appropriations: 2/3/24, 2/5/24 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 2/12/24, 97-0.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Increases the annual cap on the accrual of unused vacation leave for state employees from 240 hours to 280 hours.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON LABOR & WORKPLACE STANDARDS

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 9 members: Representatives Berry, Chair; Fosse, Vice Chair; Schmidt, Ranking Minority Member; Bronoske, Doglio, Ormsby, Ortiz-Self, Rude and Ybarra.

Staff: Kelly Leonard (786-7147).

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 30 members: Representatives Ormsby, Chair;

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Bergquist, Vice Chair; Gregerson, Vice Chair; Macri, Vice Chair; Corry, Ranking Minority Member; Chambers, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Connors, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Couture, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Berg, Callan, Chopp, Davis, Dye, Fitzgibbon, Harris, Lekanoff, Pollet, Riccelli, Rude, Ryu, Sandlin, Schmick, Senn, Simmons, Slatter, Springer, Stokesbary, Stonier, Tharinger and Wilcox.

Staff: David Pringle (786-7310).

Background:

State employees earn paid vacation leave for each month of employment, ranging from 8 to 16.6 hours depending on the length of their employment, and may accrue 240 hours of total unused vacation leave. Excess leave beyond the 240-hour cap may be accrued until an employee's anniversary date of employment. Any excess leave is extinguished if the employee does not use it by the next anniversary date. However, if an employee's request to use his or her vacation leave is deferred by the employer, then the excess leave beyond the 240-hour cap is also deferred. When an employee separates from state employment as a result of a reduction in force, resignation, dismissal, retirement, or death, the employee or his or her estate is entitled to be reimbursed for any accrued vacation leave.

Summary of Bill:

The annual cap on the accrual of unused vacation leave for state employees is increased to 280 hours.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony (Labor & Workplace Standards):

(In support) State employees perform essential services for supporting public safety and health throughout the state, often at a lower rate of pay than their counterparts in the private sector. Particularly for employees working in 24/7 facilities and emergency services, it can be very difficult to use vacation leave. This is because employers must arrange coverage in their absence. Due to the current accrual cap, these employees are losing their earned benefits. The bill raises the cap from 240 to 280 hours. Other states have much higher accrual caps. Oregon's accrual cap is 350 hours. This is a small fix with a big impact for state employees. It will help support retention and recruitment during the current labor shortage.

(Opposed) None.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony (Appropriations):

(In support) None.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying (Labor & Workplace Standards): Representative Jessica Bateman, prime sponsor; Seamus Petrie, Washington Public Employees Association; and Kati Durkin, Washington Federation of State Employees.

Persons Testifying (Appropriations): None.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying (Labor & Workplace Standards): None.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying (Appropriations): None.