

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5485

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
State Government & Elections, February 10, 2023

Title: An act relating to public employee reimbursement for child and adult dependent care expenses.

Brief Description: Concerning public employee reimbursement for child and adult dependent care expenses.

Sponsors: Senators Shewmake, Randall, Lovick, Trudeau, Cleveland, Frame, Hasegawa, Hunt, Keiser, Lias, Lovelett, Nguyen, Nobles, Saldaña, Valdez and Wilson, C..

Brief History:

Committee Activity: State Government & Elections: 1/31/23, 2/10/23 [DP, DNP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Allows for public employees to seek reimbursement of child care and adult dependent care expenses incurred while traveling on official business.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT & ELECTIONS

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Hunt, Chair; Valdez, Vice Chair; Hasegawa and Kuderer.

Minority Report: Do not pass.

Signed by Senators Wilson, J., Ranking Member; Dozier and Fortunato.

Staff: Samuel Brown (786-7470)

Background: Reimbursement for Expenses. The Office of Financial Management (OFM) sets allowances for subsistence, lodging, and travel expenses for elective and appointive

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.

officials and state employees engaged on official business away from their designated posts of duty. OFM also sets reasonable allowances for reasonable and necessary child and adult care expenses for eligible members of class one boards, commissions, councils, committees, and similar groups, while attending official meetings or performing duties as required by the group's chair. Officers or employees of local governments and special purpose districts must provide detailed accounts of travel expenses to seek reimbursement.

Ethics in Public Service Act. The Ethics in Public Service Act (Ethics Act) prohibits state officers and state employees from using their public employment for private gain or advantage, or to provide special privileges or exemptions for anyone else unless required to perform duties within the scope of their employment.

Summary of Bill: Public employees may seek reimbursement for expenses incurred for child care or adult dependent care as a result of the employee working away from their designated post of duty. Payment or reimbursement of child care or adult dependent care expenses does not constitute a private benefit or gain in violation of the Ethics Act.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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: This clarifies that when a state employee travels for work, their childcare costs can be reimbursed without it being considered a gift of public funds. Childcare is a barrier to many parents who want to attend work functions or conferences, but don't have family to help. This can have professional impacts for employees. Being able to attend more functions and conferences while having these costs covered will result in a more engaged public workforce and promote learning.

OTHER: Public employees shouldn't get special treatment for childcare assistance. Other workers handle childcare costs on their own without assistance.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Sharon Shewmake, Prime Sponsor.

OTHER: Eric Pratt, I, America.

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