
Higher Education Committee

HB 1395

Brief Description: Clarifying terms for workforce and economic development.

Sponsors: Representatives Wallace, Anderson, Hasegawa, Sells, Chase and Kenney; by request of Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board.

<p style="text-align: center;">Brief Summary of Bill</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Clarifies and makes consistent various terms related to "high demand."
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Hearing Date: 1/27/09

Staff: Andi Smith (786-7304)

Background:

The term “high demand” has become very popular in recent years, and has been interpreted in different ways creating confusion among stakeholders. To address this issue, the Governor’s office convened a workgroup of agencies to develop common definitions that were completed in 2007. The work group included the Workforce Board; the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges; the Department of Community, Trade, and Economic Development; the Employment Security Department; the Department of Labor and Industries; the Higher Education Coordinating Board; and the Council of Presidents.

The common definitions for terms related to “high demand” identified by the work group are:

High Employer Demand Program of Study: Undergraduate or graduate certificate, apprenticeship or degree program in which the number of students prepared for employment per year (from in-state institutions) is substantially less than the number of projected job openings per year in that field — statewide, or in a sub-state region.

High Demand Occupation: An occupation with a substantial number of current or projected employment opportunities.

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

High Student Demand Program of Study: Undergraduate or graduate certificate or degree program, or apprenticeship, in which student demand substantially exceeds program capacity.

The Workforce Board worked with the work group to review statutes to identify areas in need of clarification. This legislation is offered at the request of the Workforce Board.

Summary of Bill:

The legislation would clarify and make consistent workforce and economic development terms by:

1. Replacing “high demand field” with “high demand occupation” in statute for WorkFirst “work activity;”
2. Providing a statutory definition of “high employer demand program of study” in the statute pertaining to the Opportunity Grant program under the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges;
3. Replacing “high demand programs” with “high employer demand programs of study” in the state statute pertaining to the pilot program to improve services to customers of vocational rehabilitation under the Department of Labor and Industries; and
4. Inserting a common definition for “High Demand Occupation” in the statute pertaining to the training benefits program.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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