

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1395

As Passed House:

March 9, 2009

Title: An act relating to clarifying terms for workforce and economic development.

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.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Higher Education: 1/27/09, 2/13/09 [DP].

Floor Activity

Passed House: 3/9/09, 95-0.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Clarifies and makes consistent various terms related to "high demand."

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 10 members: Representatives Wallace, Chair; Sells, Vice Chair; Anderson, Ranking Minority Member; Schmick, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Angel, Carlyle, Driscoll, Haler, Hasegawa and White.

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 workgroup included the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board (Workforce Board); the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges; the Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development; the

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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 workgroup are listed below.

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.

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 workgroup 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:

- replacing “high demand field” with “high demand occupation” in statute for WorkFirst “work activity;”
- 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;
- 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
- 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.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) This bill makes several technical changes. It may not seem like an exciting bill but it does make some necessary changes. So much of what we do is geared toward "high

demand fields" or "high demand programs of study;" this minor change is actually a big deal. Clarifying these terms in statute will help make sure that everyone is on the same page.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Wallace, prime sponsor; Bryan Wilson, Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board; Jim Crabbe, State Board for Community and Technical Colleges; and John Aultman, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.