

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2608

As Reported by House Committee On:
Labor & Workforce Development

Title: An act relating to establishing the minimum wage for classified school employees.

Brief Description: Establishing the minimum wage for classified school employees.

Sponsors: Representatives Sells, Haigh, Reykdal, S. Hunt, Pollet, Stanford, Fey, Tarleton, Gregerson, Goodman, Ryu, Bergquist, Santos, Moscoso and Freeman.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Labor & Workforce Development: 2/4/14, 2/5/14 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Establishes a minimum wage of \$15 per hour for classified public school employees, beginning January 1, 2015, and requires the wage rate to be adjusted for inflation beginning January each year after.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON LABOR & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 5 members: Representatives Sells, Chair; Reykdal, Vice Chair; Green, Moeller and Ormsby.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 4 members: Representatives Manweller, Ranking Minority Member; Condotta, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Christian and G. Hunt.

Staff: Trudes Tango (786-7384).

Background:

Minimum Wage Act. Employers covered under the state Minimum Wage Act are required to pay employees age 18 or older no less than the state minimum wage rate. The state minimum wage is currently \$9.32 per hour.

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.

The state minimum wage rate must be adjusted for inflation each year. The Department of Labor and Industries (Department) calculates the adjusted rate using the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W), for the 12 months prior to each September 1.

Classified School Employee Salaries. The Legislature allocates money to each school district for employee salaries and associated fringe benefits. For classified employees of the K-12 system (such as food service workers, bus drivers, classroom aides, and custodial staff), there is not a state salary allocation schedule. Each district receives an allocation for these staff based on historical salary allocations adjusted for any cost-of-living increases. This means that there are variations in the salary levels for classified staff from district to district. The actual salary levels for classified staff are determined through the local collective bargaining process.

Summary of Bill:

Legislative Findings and Intent. The Legislature finds no school district employee who works full time should live in poverty. Providing quality education for all children in the state requires well-qualified and dedicated school employees. Minimum wage rates are inadequate to attract or retain these employees. The Legislature intends to increase classified salary allocations as necessary to comply with its obligation to provide ample funding for classified wages required by the bill. The Legislature intends that all school districts use state and non-state funds as necessary to ensure that all classified employees receive the minimum wage rate established by the bill.

Minimum Wage. The minimum wage rate for classified school employees is established at \$15 per hour beginning January 1, 2015. Beginning January 1, 2016, the minimum wage for those employees must be adjusted by the Department for inflation using the CPI-W.

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:

(In support) It is difficult to retain classified school employees. School custodians, bus drivers, and other school employees are the lowest paid workers, and schools are receiving fewer applicants for those jobs. Having a \$15 minimum wage would help maintain higher standards and retain workers. These workers are living in poverty and that undermines the health and safety in schools. There needs to be a minimum wage that reflects the real cost of

living. Kids do better in school when their parents and school employees are not worrying about mere survival.

(With concerns) The bill's language referring to the use of state and nonstate funds is concerning. The state needs to provide money to meet this fiscal obligation.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Patrick Nicholson, Washington Education Association; Lani Todd, Service Employees International Union 925; Doug Nelson, Puget Sound Energy; Christian Duke, International Union of Operating Engineers 286; David Westberg, Operating Engineers 609; and Lacey Woodside, Washington Education Association.

(With concerns) Fred Yancey, Washington Association School Administrators.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: Julie Salvi and Cathy Smith, Washington Education Association.