H-1743.1

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**HOUSE BILL 2094**

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**State of Washington 66th Legislature 2019 Regular Session**

**By** Representatives McCaslin, Hoff, Dolan, Dent, and Corry

AN ACT Relating to required qualifications for early learning providers; adding a new section to chapter 43.216 RCW; and creating a new section.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  (1) The legislature finds that the department of children, youth, and families has adopted new staff qualifications for early learning providers in rules that take effect August 1, 2019. The legislature further finds that some positions described in the rules have five years from the effective date of the rule to comply with the new qualification requirements, while others must comply upon the date of hire or promotion into the position. The requirement for newly hired and promoted child care center directors and assistant directors to hold an early childhood education certificate or equivalent at the time of hire into their new position does not allow a reasonable time frame for these professionals to acquire the necessary credential. Many early learning providers are on lengthy waiting lists to attend early childhood education classes and community colleges do not have the capacity to enroll them prior to the August 2019 deadline. These factors further hinder a workforce already experiencing declining numbers of providers.

(2) Therefore, the legislature intends to allow excellent early learning professionals who are promoted to the role of center assistant director or director to take advantage of the opportunity for professional growth by allowing these providers additional time and flexibility to meet staff qualification requirements. Further, the legislature intends to clarify that college credits earned toward an early childhood education degree will be considered an equivalent if the number of earned credits equals forty-five credits or more.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 43.216 RCW to read as follows:

Before August 1, 2019, the department must revise rules related to professional qualifications for early learning providers to allow any provider to meet the required qualifications within five years after August 1, 2019, or within five years after being employed or promoted into his or her position, whichever is later. When revising the rules, the department must recognize forty-five completed credits in early childhood education as equivalent to the state early childhood education certificate.

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