S-1611.1

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**SENATE BILL 5929**

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

**By** Senators Keiser, Saldaña, Hasegawa, Walsh, Das, Hunt, Nguyen, and Frockt

AN ACT Relating to exempting the disclosure of names in employment investigation records; amending RCW 42.56.250; and creating a new section.

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

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  The legislature finds that workplace harassment remains a persistent problem and there is an urgent need to address barriers that prevent people from reporting harassment. The United States equal employment opportunity commission select task force on the study of harassment in the workplace released a report in 2016 finding that ninety percent of individuals who experience harassment never take formal action, and noting that seventy-five percent of employees who spoke out against workplace mistreatment faced some sort of retaliation. The legislature finds that it is in the public interest for state employees to feel safe to report incidents of harassment when it occurs and to protect these employees from an increased risk of retaliation. The legislature finds that the release of the identities of employees who report or participate in harassment investigations increases the risk of retaliation, invades the privacy of a vulnerable population, and significantly reduces reporting of harassment. The legislature finds that if state government can make it easier for victims and witnesses of harassment to come forward and report harassment, harassment issues can be dealt with before they worsen or spread.

**Sec.**  RCW 42.56.250 and 2018 c 109 s 17 are each amended to read as follows:

The following employment and licensing information is exempt from public inspection and copying under this chapter:

(1) Test questions, scoring keys, and other examination data used to administer a license, employment, or academic examination;

(2) All applications for public employment, including the names of applicants, resumes, and other related materials submitted with respect to an applicant;

(3) Professional growth plans (PGPs) in educator license renewals submitted through the eCert system in the office of the superintendent of public instruction;

(4) The following information held by any public agency in personnel records, public employment related records, volunteer rosters, or included in any mailing list of employees or volunteers of any public agency: Residential addresses, residential telephone numbers, personal wireless telephone numbers, personal email addresses, social security numbers, driver's license numbers, identicard numbers, and emergency contact information of employees or volunteers of a public agency, and the names, dates of birth, residential addresses, residential telephone numbers, personal wireless telephone numbers, personal email addresses, social security numbers, and emergency contact information of dependents of employees or volunteers of a public agency. For purposes of this subsection, "employees" includes independent provider home care workers as defined in RCW 74.39A.240;

(5) Information that identifies a person who, while an agency employee: (a) Seeks advice, under an informal process established by the employing agency, in order to ascertain his or her rights in connection with a possible unfair practice under chapter 49.60 RCW against the person; and (b) requests his or her identity or any identifying information not be disclosed;

(6) Investigative records compiled by an employing agency ((~~conducting an active and ongoing~~)) in connection with an investigation of a possible unfair practice under chapter 49.60 RCW or of a possible violation of other federal, state, or local laws prohibiting discrimination in employment. Records are exempt in their entirety while the investigation is active and ongoing. After the agency has notified the complaining employee of the outcome of the investigation, the records may be disclosed only if the names of complainants, other accusers, and witnesses are redacted;

(7) Criminal history records checks for board staff finalist candidates conducted pursuant to RCW 43.33A.025;

(8) Except as provided in RCW 47.64.220, salary and benefit information for maritime employees collected from private employers under RCW 47.64.220(1) and described in RCW 47.64.220(2);

(9) Photographs and month and year of birth in the personnel files of employees and workers of criminal justice agencies as defined in RCW 10.97.030. The news media, as defined in RCW 5.68.010(5), shall have access to the photographs and full date of birth. For the purposes of this subsection, news media does not include any person or organization of persons in the custody of a criminal justice agency as defined in RCW 10.97.030;

(10) The global positioning system data that would indicate the location of the residence of a public employee or volunteer using the global positioning system recording device; and

(11) Until the person reaches eighteen years of age, information, otherwise disclosable under chapter 29A.08 RCW, that relates to a future voter, except for the purpose of processing and delivering ballots.

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