

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5705

As Passed Senate, March 10, 1995

Title: An act relating to work force development programs in the employment security department.

Brief Description: Establishing requirements for work force development programs in the employment security department.

Sponsors: Senators Newhouse, Prentice, Pelz, Wojahn, Hale, Heavey, Deccio, Palmer, Prince and Winsley; by request of Joint Task Force on Unemployment Insurance.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Labor, Commerce & Trade: 2/7/95, 2/14/95 [DP].
Passed Senate, 3/10/95, 46-0.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON LABOR, COMMERCE & TRADE

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Pelz, Chair; Heavey, Vice Chair; Deccio, Franklin, Fraser, Hale, Palmer and Wojahn.

Staff: Jack Brummel (786-7428)

Background: The Employment Security Department receives approximately \$90 million in workforce development funds yearly. The Joint Legislative Task Force on Unemployment Insurance found fragmentation in the state's workforce development system and recommended a number of steps the department could take to improve coordination, integration, and delivery of services. These included: (1) submitting training plans to the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board for review; (2) prioritizing federal Job Training Partnership Act funds for training in higher wage jobs; (3) encouraging the use of commissioner approved training for those likely to exhaust their unemployment benefits; (4) and integrating its business assistance programs with other agencies' programs.

Summary of Bill: The Employment Security Department is directed to submit operating plans for workforce training and development programs to the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Council that are consistent with the council's comprehensive plan. Job Training Partnership Act funds are prioritized to those programs that match individual capacity and needs, and provide training for higher-wage jobs available in the community.

Long-term unemployed workers or workers likely to exhaust their unemployment benefits who are satisfactorily progressing in a training program approved by the commissioner are considered in training with the approval of the commissioner, and are exempt from the normal unemployment insurance reporting and work search requirements. The department must provide information on the right to receive benefits while in an approved training

program to applicants for unemployment insurance who are likely to exhaust their unemployment benefits.

The department coordinates and integrates its business assistance efforts with the Department of Community, Trade, and Economic Development, the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, and the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Council. The department reports to the Legislature on its coordination and integration efforts.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 1, 1995.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: This bill supports implementation of the state's comprehensive plan for workforce training and education and has the effect of making Employment Security's federally funded programs consistent with the state's comprehensive plan. It is consistent with the mission of the Workforce Coordinating Board.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Ellen O'Brien Saunders, Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board (pro); Wendy Holden, Employment Security Dept. (pro).