

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6431

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Labor, Commerce & Trade, January 31, 1996

Title: An act relating to state employment based on higher education.

Brief Description: Prohibiting employment discrimination based on higher education.

Sponsors: Senators Sutherland and Bauer.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Labor, Commerce & Trade: 1/25/96, 1/31/96 [DP, DNP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON LABOR, COMMERCE & TRADE

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Pelz, Chair; Heavey, Vice Chair; A. Anderson, Deccio, Franklin and Wojahn.

Minority Report: Do not pass.

Signed by Senator Newhouse.

Staff: Katie Healy (786-7403)

Background: An employer is prohibited from refusing to hire or employ, or to fire an individual on the basis of the individual's age. There is concern that a similar provision is needed prohibiting state agencies from discriminating against an individual who has not attended or graduated from an institution of higher education.

Summary of Bill: A state agency commits an unfair practice by refusing to hire or employ or to bar or terminate from employment any individual because that person did not attend or graduate with a degree from an institution of higher education. A state agency may require that a job applicant possess a high school diploma or the equivalent.

A state agency is prohibited from advertising or publishing a job opening which expresses any limitation, specification, or discrimination regarding those who have not attended or received a degree from an institution of higher education. In a civil action alleging such a violation, the court may impose a penalty of \$1,000 in addition to any award of actual damages. The prevailing party may be awarded reasonable attorneys' fees and costs.

State agency is defined as the departments, offices, agencies, or institutions of state government, the Legislature, institutions of higher education, school districts, and educational service districts.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: Many people with valuable work experience are being turned away from jobs for which they are qualified, with the exception of having a degree from an institution of higher learning. Many persons are finding themselves without a job and unable to get another due to this discrimination. Valuable people with experience are being overlooked. Several statistics regarding those with degrees were presented. Few credits from community college transfer over to a four-year college. Getting a degree is expensive.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: John White (pro); Susan Quattrociocch, NE Tech Prep Consortium (pro).