

SENATE BILL REPORT

SSB 6583

As Passed Senate, February 9, 1996

Title: An act relating to higher education.

Brief Description: Clarifying eligibility requirements for state-funded benefits for part-time academic employees of community and technical colleges.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Higher Education (originally sponsored by Senators Spanel, Bauer, Kohl, McAuliffe, Winsley, Rinehart and Smith).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Higher Education: 1/24/96, 1/25/96 [DPS-WM].

Ways & Means: 1/31/96, 2/6/96 [DPS (HIE)].

Passed Senate, 2/9/96, 46-3.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6583 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators Bauer, Chair; Kohl, Vice Chair; Hale, McAuliffe, Prince, Rasmussen, Sheldon, West, Wood and Zarelli.

Staff: Jennifer Hanlon (786-7784)

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6583 as recommended by Committee on Higher Education be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Rinehart, Chair; Loveland, Vice Chair; Bauer, Drew, Fraser, Hargrove, Hochstatter, Johnson, Kohl, Long, Moyer, Pelz, Quigley, Roach, Sheldon, Snyder, Spanel, Strannigan, Sutherland and Winsley.

Staff: Michael Groesch (786-7434)

Background: State employees who work more than one-half time are eligible for state health benefits. Part-time community college faculty receive different benefits at different institutions because there is not a uniform method for calculating part-time work loads. Additionally, there are some institutions where part-time faculty do not receive any benefits.

Summary of Bill: Definitions are created for the purposes of determining eligibility of state-mandated insurance and retirement benefits for part-time academic employees in community and technical colleges. Community and technical colleges must report to the appropriate agencies the hours worked by part-time academic employees as a ratio of the

part-time academic work load to the full-time academic work load in a given discipline in a given institution.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For (Higher Education): Inequity in benefits impacts the morale of all faculty. Budgets should not be balanced on the backs of part-time instructors. It is frightening not to have state benefits and arbitrarily denying benefits is unfair.

Testimony Against (Higher Education): This bill could exacerbate the problem of having too many part-time faculty members. It could cause institutions to cut part-time hours to keep those employees below the eligibility line.

Testified (Higher Education): Senator Harriet Spanel, prime sponsor (pro); Wendy Rader-Konofalski, WA Federation of Teachers (pro); Diane Butcher-Evans, Green River Community College (pro); Larry Lael, State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (con); Lenore Vest, Washington Education Association (pro).

Testimony For (Ways & Means): Although this is a bargainable issue, the inequities which have risen will be difficult to deal with through the normal processes. If the policy embodied in the bill is put into law, sufficient funding should be provided in the budget to address the costs associated with adding additional health benefit recipients.

Testimony Against (Ways & Means): None.

Testified (Ways & Means): Vincent P. Troccoli, Glen Ness, Pierce College (pro); Wendy Rader-Konofalski, WA Federation of Teachers (pro); Larry Lael, State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (con); Lenore Vest, Washington Education Association (pro).

House Amendment(s): A task force is created to conduct an ethics audit of the community and technical college system. The task force must consist of members of the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges and focus on the treatment of part-time faculty. The task force must report its findings by October 31, 1997. By January 5, 1998, the state board must adopt a set of ethical operating principles.