

# HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Olympia Washington

## Bill Analysis

Bill No. HB 1941

Creating supported employment programs  
Brief title

Public Arg: 2/28/97

Reps. Robertson/Scott/Schmidt  
Sponsor

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### BACKGROUND:

In 1986 the Legislature recognized that people with developmental disabilities have high rates of unemployment, and created a joint select committee to investigate barriers to employment for this segment of our population. As a result of recommendations by the joint select committee, several bills were enacted by the Legislature in 1987 to help address this problem. These bills included the establishment of a disability accommodation fund to help state agencies and institutions of higher education accommodate jobsite and equipment needs of people with disabilities requiring the Department of Employment Security to give particular and special attention to service people with disabilities and requiring the Department of Employment Security to establish an information clearinghouse for use by private and public sector employers and persons of disability.

The package of legislation adopted by the Legislature did not include the requirement for state agencies to designate a staff person who would be responsible for information and resource referrals to people with disabilities.

### SUMMARY:

Each state agency with at least 50 full-time equivalent employees must develop and implement a supported employment program. The Department of Personnel is required to educate, encourage and assist state agencies in implementing supported employment programs.

Each state agency required to implement a supported employment program must designate a coordinator to serve as the liaison between the agency and the Department of Personnel regarding supported employment. The coordinator is responsible for information and resource referrals regarding the agency's supported employment program. The agency is also responsible for establishing goals for hiring persons with developmental disabilities and submitting an annual report to the Supported Employment Advisory Committee. The annual report must describe the program in place, indicate the number of persons placed in supported employment positions and evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the program.

The Department of Personnel is responsible for providing human resource technical assistance to agencies implementing supported employment programs.

A Supported Employment Advisory Committee is created within the Department of Personnel and consists of representatives from the Department of Personnel, the Department of Social and Health Services, and supported employment provider associations. The advisory committee is responsible for reviewing annual reports on supported employment submitted by each agency and with assisting the Department of Personnel to meet its obligation. The advisory committee must, upon request of the Legislature, prepare an annual report that evaluates the overall progress of supported employment programs in the state.

Any supported employment positions do not count against an agency's allotted full-time equivalent employee positions.

Supported employment is defined as employment for individuals with developmental disabilities who may require on-the-job training and long-term support in order to fulfill their job duties successfully. This program offers the same wages and benefits as similar non-supported employment positions.

**FISCAL NOTE:** Requested February 23, 1997.

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill passed.