

HOUSE BILL ANALYSIS

ESB 5490

Title: An act relating to employment assessments for recipients of temporary assistance for needy families.

Brief Description: Requiring temporary assistance for needy families employment assessments to screen for learning disabilities.

Sponsors: Senators Wojahn, Winsley, Kline, Fairley, B. Sheldon, McAuliffe, Thibaudeau, Snyder, Rasmussen and Costa.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICES

Meeting Date: February 16, 2000.

Bill Analysis Prepared by: Tracey Taylor (786-7196).

Background: Recognition of learning disabilities in adults, and their impact on work adjustment, is fairly recent. These disabilities may require an adjustment in the employee's working conditions, such as giving directions orally as opposed to written. Research has shown that more than half of those on Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) in Washington have a learning disability or low IQ. This can hamper their employability; thus, an early identification of those with learning disabilities may help facilitate the delivery of appropriate services.

TANF requires participants, who are not otherwise excused, to engage in work activities. This includes a job search and job readiness training. If the participant has not obtained paid, unsubsidized employment by the end of the job search component, he must be referred to a work activity that will develop his skills or knowledge to make them more employable.

Under current law, TANF participants undergo an assessment upon the completion of the job search component. The factors considered are those critical to obtaining employment, including, but not limited to, education, employment strengths, and employment history. The assessment may be performed by the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) or an entity under contract with the department. The assessment is used to develop an individual responsibility plan setting forth an employment goal and a plan to move a participant into employment.

Summary of Bill: As part of the assessment performed after completion of the job search component, the DSHS must screen TANF participants for learning disabilities. The screening may be performed by the department or by a contractor.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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