

HOUSE BILL ANALYSIS

SSB 6558

Title: An act relating to public assistance recipients participating in higher education programs.

Brief Description: Including higher education programs in the work activity definition.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Higher Education (originally sponsored by Senator Kohl-Welles).

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICES

Meeting Date: February 22, 2000.

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

Background: Under the WorkFirst program, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) recipients are required to engage in job-related activities. There are certain work-related activities that fulfill this requirement, including subsidized paid employment, on-the-job training, and some vocational education.

Work-study is a need-based financial aid program that subsidizes the wages of students employed through the program. Under the state program, employers who hire work-study participants get partially reimbursed by the state for the students' wages. If it is an on-campus employer, the employer gets reimbursed 80 percent of the wages paid; if it is an off-campus employer, the employer gets reimbursed 65 percent of the wages paid. The statutes establishing the state work-study program prohibit the displacement of existing employees in order to employ a work-study student and receive the subsidy.

Internships and practicums are supervised practical training. In vocational programs, nearly all the degree and certificate programs require some form of an internship or practicum, as do the majority of programs in the medical fields. An example of a practicum is student teaching. The terms of the internship or practicum, including the hours, length, and whether it is paid or unpaid, are up to the individual institutions of higher education.

Summary of Bill: The definition of work activity— is expanded to include work-study, practicums, and internships.

Work-study, which is subsidized paid employment, is limited to 24 months. A practicum which is required to complete a vocational educational program, or to obtain a license or

certificate to practice, is allowed without any time limit. An internship may be paid or unpaid and has no time limit.

Comparison to Companion House Bill 2367, as passed out of the Children and Family Services Committee: Provisions regarding work-study are the same. Internships and practicums are examples of work experience– that must be required to complete a course of vocational study or to obtain a license or certificate in a high demand field, and are limited to 12 months.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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