

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5522

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Labor & Workforce Development, February 25, 1999
Ways & Means, March 5, 1999

Title: An act relating to work activity provisions for recipients of temporary assistance for needy families.

Brief Description: Changing work activity provisions for recipients of temporary assistance for needy families.

Sponsors: Senators Fairley and Kohl-Welles.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Labor & Workforce Development: 2/2/99, 2/25/99 [DPS].
Ways & Means: 3/4/99, 3/5/99 [DPS (LWD)].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON LABOR & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5522 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Fairley, Chair; Franklin, Vice Chair; Hochstatter, Kline, Oke and Wojahn.

Staff: Joanne Conrad (786-7472)

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5522 as recommended by Committee on Labor & Workforce Development be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Loveland, Chair; Bauer, Vice Chair; Brown, Vice Chair; Fairley, Fraser, Kline, Kohl-Welles, Rasmussen, Roach, B. Sheldon, Snyder, Spanel, Thibaudeau, Winsley and Wojahn.

Staff: Brian Sims (786-7431)

Background: Washington State's welfare-to-work program, WorkFirst, provides for an assessment of recipients of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) when the recipients complete a job search component of the program. The assessment focuses on employability.

WorkFirst also requires that the recipient have an "Individual Responsibility Plan," based upon the assessment. The plan lists the obligations and employment plan of the recipient, and describes the services made available by the state to enable the recipient to obtain and keep a job.

Summary of Substitute Bill: The requirement to perform employability screening of WorkFirst recipients is placed at the beginning of the recipient's participation in the WorkFirst program. The initial assessment includes screening for barriers to self-sufficiency, including homelessness, drug and alcohol abuse, domestic violence victimization, limited English proficiency and illiteracy.

The Individual Responsibility Plan recommends that adult recipients assure that their school-age children attend school and that recipients immunize their children.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: Assessment of TANF recipients is replaced with employability screening. A requirement to document childhood immunization is removed.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: DSHS needs to do better employability screening prior to referral to job placement.

Testimony Against: TANF parents should not be subject to sanction if they cannot document childhood immunization.

Testified: Carolyn Logue, NFIB (pro); Cassie Sauer, Children's Alliance; Cynthia Shurtleff, WA Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics (opposed in part); Ken Miller, OFM (information only); Lonnie Johns-Brown, NASW (pro); Randi Abrams, Jewish Federation (pro); Laurie Lippold, Children's Home Society (pro).