

FINAL BILL REPORT

ESB 6236

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Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Promoting efficiency with respect to employment and related services.

Sponsors: Senator Fairley; by request of Employment Security Department.

Senate Committee on Labor & Workforce Development

House Committee on Commerce & Labor

Background: A government agency or private organization may request confidential information held by the Employment Security Department by submitting an application to the department. With some exceptions, the requesting party must also notify the individual or employer involved that information is being sought. When notification occurs, the Employment Security Department must consider an objection to the release of information before the information is released.

Thirteen one-stop WorkSource career development centers are currently operating throughout the state. The centers were created to provide all the job resources, technology and personal assistance that job seekers need in one place. Businesses can also recruit new employees through WorkSource centers.

There is concern that the process of requesting data limits the ability of the department and partner organizations to jointly track program outcomes of WorkSource career centers in a timely and efficient manner. In addition, WorkSource participants are sometimes required to submit duplicate information to different organizations due to the lack of data sharing between WorkSource partner organizations.

Currently, information provided by the Department of Employment Security to other agencies is not explicitly exempt from public disclosure.

Summary: The Commissioner of Employment Security may enter into data sharing contracts with agencies and organizations involved in one-stop WorkSource career centers. The commissioner may also enter into data sharing contracts with state agencies to facilitate operation and evaluation of state programs.

The contract takes the place of a formal agency request and the personal notification requirement is waived. Confidential information is to be exchanged only to the extent that the information is necessary for the operation or evaluation of state services and is not subject to public disclosure. A civil penalty of \$5,000 is created for the misuse or unauthorized release of information.

The confidential information provided by Employment Security to the Office of Financial Management and the Department of Social and Health Services for evaluation of the WorkFirst program is not subject to public disclosure. Individually identifiable information

received by the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board is also made exempt from public inspection and copying.

The Employment Security Department must notify individuals who apply for services from one-stop career centers that information is being shared under data-sharing contracts with other one-stop partners. The notification must: (1) advise the individual that he or she may request that private and confidential information not be shared and that such a request will not affect his or her receipt of services; (2) describe the nature of the information being shared, the general use of the shared information, and those with whom the information will be shared; (3) inform the individual that information will be used only for purposes of delivering services and any other disclosure is prohibited; and (4) be provided in English and an alternate language selected by the one-stop center or job service center that is appropriate for the community where the center is located.

Votes on Final Passage:

Senate	45	0	
House	98	0	(House amended)
Senate	48	0	(Senate concurred)

Effective: June 8, 2000