

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SSCR 8404

As Reported by House Committee On:
Higher Education

Brief Description: Adopting the update to the state comprehensive plan for work force training and education.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Higher Education (originally sponsored by Senators Kohl-Welles, Prentice, Winsley, Carlson, Horn, McAuliffe and Franklin).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Higher Education: 2/26/02, 2/28/02 [DPA].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill
(As Amended by House Committee)

- Adopts goals set forth in the updated comprehensive plan for work force training and education.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass as amended. Signed by 7 members: Representatives Kenney, Chair; Fromhold, Vice Chair; Cox, Ranking Minority Member; Chase, Gombosky, Jarrett and Lantz.

Minority Report: Without recommendation. Signed by 1 member: Representative Dunn.

Staff: Antonio Sanchez (786-7383).

Background:

The Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board (WTECB) is required to develop and maintain a comprehensive plan for workforce training and education. State law requires the plan to be updated every two years and submitted to the Governor and the appropriate policy committees of the Legislature. Following public hearings, the Legislature recommends approval or changes to the plan which then becomes the state's workforce training policy.

Summary of Amended Bill:

The challenges are identified that are facing Washington in achieving a workforce development system that offers each citizen access to life-long high quality academic and skills education, effective help when looking for work, and personalized assistance for progress in the labor market.

The WTECB identified goals are: (1) to close the gap between the needs of employers for skilled workers and the supply of Washington residents prepared to meet that need; (2) to enable workers to make smooth transitions so that they, and their employers, may fully benefit from the new, changing economy by putting in place a coherent strategy for dislocated and incumbent worker training; (3) to assist disadvantaged youth, persons with disabilities, new labor market entrants, recent immigrants, and other low-wage workers by developing a wage progression strategy for low-income workers; and (4) to make the vision of Work Source a reality so that workforce development programs are customer friendly, broadly accessible, and fully committed to continuous quality improvement.

Amended Bill Compared to Substitute Bill:

Identifies the major work force challenges and adds seamless access to life long learning at all levels of education as another one of the challenges to be considered by the board.

Removes language that commends and expressed gratitude to the board for their dedication and commitment to the state of Washington in working with labor, business, local work force development councils and replaces it with language that encourages the board to continue to work labor, business, local work force development councils.

Appropriation: None.**Fiscal Note:** Not Requested.

Testimony For: The workforce training board needs the resolution to confirm that the Legislature is in agreement with the boards stated goals and their strategic plan for workforce development. The challenges facing workforce development in the state need to be identified. What the workforce development system is doing to meet the workforce challenges also needs to be outlined.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Senator Kohl-Welles, prime sponsor; Ellen O'Brien Saunders, Workforce Training Education Coordinating Board; and Randy Loomans, Washington State Labor Council.

