

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1583

As Reported By House Committee On:
Higher Education

Title: An act relating to higher education.

Brief Description: Clarifying eligibility requirements for state-funded benefits for part-time academic employees of community and technical colleges.

Sponsors: Representatives Jacobsen, Carlson, Quall, Bray, Rayburn, Kessler, J. Kohl, Shin, Wood, Basich, Ogden, Brumsickle, King, Van Luven and L. Johnson.

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
Higher Education, February 23, 1993, DPS.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 18 members: Representatives Jacobsen, Chair; Quall, Vice Chair; Brumsickle, Ranking Minority Member; Sheahan, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Basich; Bray; Carlson; Casada; Finkbeiner; Flemming; Kessler; J. Kohl; Mielke; Ogden; Orr; Rayburn; Shin; and Wood.

Staff: Susan Hosch (786-7120).

Background: Part-time instructors comprise more than 60 percent of the headcount faculty and 40 percent of the full time equivalent faculty at community and technical colleges. According to a 1990 survey of part-time faculty conducted by the Washington Federation of Teachers, about 62 percent of the respondents were females, about 66 percent had dependents, and about 60 percent relied on their earnings as instructors for the primary source of household income. In addition, 62 percent of the respondents had advanced college degrees, over 60 percent had more than five years of teaching experience, and 62 percent identified themselves primarily as teachers rather than as professionals who also teach. Only 30 percent of the respondents receive medical benefits.

For the 1993-95 biennium, the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges has requested \$2,939,000 to pay the

state's share of retirement benefits for part-time faculty. This amount would allow 850 part-time faculty to participate in the TIAA-CREF retirement system. In order to effect the change in policy, the eligibility threshold for participation in the retirement system would be lowered from 80 percent to 50 percent of a full-time teaching load. There is no standard, system-wide method for calculating a part-time teaching load for the purpose of determining state benefit packages.

Summary of Substitute Bill: For the purpose of determining which part-time faculty at community and technical colleges are eligible for state mandated retirement and insurance benefits, a standard formula will be used. The hours worked by part-time faculty will be reported as a ratio of the part-time academic work load to the full-time academic work load in a given discipline at the institution where the faculty are employed. Unless otherwise defined in a contract adopted through collective bargaining, the work loads will be based on the number of in-class hours that must be taught by an instructor in order to fulfill his or her employment obligations.

Standard definitions are adopted for the following terms: "full-time academic work load," "in-class teaching hours," "academic employee," and "part-time academic work load."

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The definitions of "full-time academic work load" and "academic employee" are revised. Full-time academic work load will be based on the number of in-class teaching hours that a full-time instructor must reach to fulfill his or her employment obligations. If a full-time work load is not defined through a collective bargaining agreement, there will be no attempt to define that work load on the basis of in-class hours taught by full-time instructors at other colleges. Clarifying amendments are adopted to ensure that the definition of academic employee includes technical college instructors; that state mandated benefits include insurance and retirement benefits; and that the hours worked by part-time instructors will be reported as a ratio of the part-time to the full-time academic work load.

Fiscal Note: Requested February 15, 1993.

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

Testimony For: (in favor) Part-time faculty in community and technical colleges are dedicated, excellent instructors. Without their presence, community and technical colleges would be unable to deliver high-quality, low-cost

educational programs to over 200,000 Washingtonians every year. For many part-time instructors, teaching is a major source of income. However, most of them do not receive health care or retirement benefits. Some institutions count the hours worked by part-time faculty differently than the hours worked by full-time faculty. It is theoretically possible at some institutions for a part-time faculty to teach a full load and still be denied state funded health benefits. If the hours taught by part-time instructors were counted as a ratio of the full-time work load, some part-time faculty members would be eligible for health care and insurance benefits. This bill attempts to standardize the way that part-time faculty work loads are considered for the purposes of calculating eligibility for state mandated benefits.

Testimony Against: None.

Witnesses: (in favor) Wendy Rader-Konofalski, Washington Federation of Teachers; Diane Butcher-Evans, Green River Community College; Keith Hoeller, Highline Community College; and J.B. Hanna, Yakima Community College.