

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SSB 5992

As Reported By House Committee On:
Commerce & Labor

Title: An act relating to the work force training and education coordinating board.

Brief Description: Clarifying the role of the work force training and education coordinating board.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Labor, Commerce & Trade (originally sponsored by Senators Bauer, Pelz, Wood, Prince, Kohl, Deccio, Heavey and Rasmussen).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Commerce & Labor: 3/23/95, 3/27/95 [DPA].

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE & LABOR

Majority Report: Do pass as amended. Signed by 11 members: Representatives Lisk, Chairman; Hargrove, Vice Chairman; Thompson, Vice Chairman; Romero, Ranking Minority Member; Conway, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Cairnes; Cody; Cole; Fuhrman; Goldsmith and Horn.

Staff: Pam Madson (786-7166).

Background: The Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board (WTECB) was created in 1991. Its purpose is to provide planning, coordination, evaluation, monitoring, and policy analysis for the state's training system as a whole. In a recent report on workforce training funds, the board identified 43 state and federal programs involved with training and educating the state's workforce. Implementation of these programs is spread among several public entities.

The WTECB is charged with 27 duties to be performed in cooperation with the agencies involved in the state's workforce training and education system. These duties include: developing and maintaining a comprehensive plan for workforce training; establishing minimum standards to be used by agencies in evaluating programs they implement; requiring standards for collecting data and setting a minimum of core data to be collected by each reporting agency; and performing an outcome based evaluation of the workforce training and education system using net-impact and cost-benefit analyses.

The WTECB issued the first comprehensive plan in the fall of 1994. The board is also charged with reviewing the state training system for consistency with the comprehensive plan. There are no statutory timelines for performing any of the evaluations.

In a move to consolidate federal human resource programs, Congress amended the federal Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) to provide more coordination through creation of Human Resource Investment Councils (HRIC) in each state. Congress granted states discretion in establishing this council and allowed states to continue using an existing state council to perform the functions of an HRIC. For Washington, WTECB performs the functions described for an HRIC under the federal law but its composition differs from that recommended in the federal law.

Summary of Amended Bill: The Legislature intends to seek input from local and state-wide organizations concerned with workforce development on the allocation of federal funds in the event that federal funds are distributed in the form of block grants.

Implementation of the State Comprehensive Plan for Workforce Training and Education

The comprehensive plan developed by the Workforce Training and Education Board must be updated every two years and presented to the Governor and the Legislature. After public hearings the Legislature by concurrent resolution must approve or alter the initial plan and its updates.

The plan must identify actions that can be taken by the agencies represented on the board for each of their workforce development programs that are consistent with the comprehensive plan. Those agencies include the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, Employment Security Department, and the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges.

Each of these agencies must have operating plans for their workforce development efforts that are consistent with the comprehensive plan. Annual progress reports to the board are required.

The comprehensive plan must include recommendations to the Governor and the Legislature on workforce training programs that need to be modified, consolidated, eliminated or initiated.

By December 1 of each year, the board must report to the Legislature on its progress toward implementing the comprehensive plan and the progress of the operating agencies in meeting their obligations under the plan.

HRIC Functions

In addition to its designation as the State Board for Vocational Education as required under federal law, the WTECB shall perform the functions of the Human Resource Investment Council (HRIC) which is a council designated under federal law. The board must provide policy advice for any federal law relating to workforce development that does not have a designated advisory group. The board must advise the Governor and the Legislature on the best way to integrate new federal initiatives into the state workforce training system. It must make recommendations on how to streamline the state's compliance with federal guidelines.

Reporting Dates Specified

The following timelines are established: (1) By December 31, 1995, specify the standards for data collection and specify the common core data to be collected by the agencies of the state's training system;

(2) By January 1, 1996, complete the first outcome-based evaluation of the training system and by September 1, 1996, complete its net-impact and cost-benefit evaluation;

(3) Using the net-impact and cost-benefit evaluations make recommendations to the Governor and the Legislature on modification, consolidation, elimination, or initiation of workforce training and education programs

(4) Agencies must evaluate their workforce development programs using minimum standards set by the board. These evaluations must occur biennially with the first evaluation completed by July 1, 1996. The evaluation of the adult basic skills education program is done by the advisory council on adult education;

(5) By January 1, 1996, assess the supply of and demand for training services and recommend ways to bridge any gaps between supply and demand; and

(6) By January 1, 1996, identify barriers to improved coordination of the state's workforce development system including waivers of statutory requirements and administrative rules.

Amended Bill Compared to Substitute Bill: The timeline for specifying standards for data collection and specifying the common core data to be collected by the agencies is extended from July 1 to December 31, 1995. The Legislature clarifies its intent that local input will be sought on the allocation of federal workforce training funds if Congress uses block grants as a method of distributing federal funds in the future.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: When the workforce training and education coordinating board was formed, the result expected was a coordinated collaborative effort to meet the state's needs that did not duplicate efforts, that was predictable, and that was measurable and would identify resources used for these purposes. The desire is to maximize the benefit of our federal dollars. We're not there yet. This bill provides a sharpening and clarification of legislative intent and gives aggressive accountability deadlines to the board and its operating agencies. It doesn't change the scope of the board's duties. It clarifies the board's and the agencies' duties.

Testimony Against: There are congressional discussions being held on changing the way money for federal programs will be distributed to state and local entities. The federal government may choose to block grant federal money and may distribute the funds through a broad-based state entity such as an Human Resource Investment Council. This bill gives the Washington's Training and Education Coordinating Board (WTECB) a preeminent role in advising the Governor on new federal initiatives. There is concern that membership on the WTECB does not include local entities and is not broad enough. The Legislature and the Governor will be advised on federal programs by a board that does not have local input. There is concern about representation from both eastern and western Washington.

Testified: (In favor) Senator Al Bauer, prime sponsor; Senator Dwight Pelz; and Ellen O'Brien Saunders and Tom Dooley, Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board. (Opposed) Robert Thieme, Pentad Private Industry Council; Bob Fay, Tri-Valley Private Industry Council; and Gil Mendoza, Covie and Tacoma Public Schools.