

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6036

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Commerce & Labor, March 4, 1997

Title: An act relating to on-the-job training for undertrained, underemployed, or unemployed persons.

Brief Description: Providing on-the-job training opportunities for undertrained, underemployed, or unemployed persons.

Sponsors: Senators Schow, Deccio, Anderson, Rasmussen and Horn.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Commerce & Labor: 3/3/97, 3/4/97 [DP, DNP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE & LABOR

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Schow, Chair; Horn, Vice Chair; Anderson and Newhouse.

Minority Report: Do not pass.

Signed by Senators Franklin, Fraser and Heavey.

Staff: Jack Brummel (786-7428)

Background: Work-based learning has proven to be an effective way to improve worker skills. This benefits workers by improving their employability and benefits businesses by increasing productivity. Work-based learning and on-the-job training can be particularly useful to undertrained, underemployed, and unemployed individuals who do not have strong ties to the labor market. Businesses can be encouraged to offer on-the-job training to such individuals by reducing or offsetting the training costs.

A recent court case has voided electrical contractor licensing provisions favorable to trade schools.

Apprentices receive apprentice wages on public works projects only if they are in an apprenticeship program approved by the State Apprenticeship Council.

Summary of Bill: The Jobs for the Future Program is established to provide undertrained, underemployed, and unemployed persons with on-the-job training opportunities. An on-the-job training council is established by the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges to approve training projects as well as the costs per trainee and occupation specific competency standards associated with the training. The council is to have three business, three labor, and three educational institution representatives.

Projects must provide training in labor demand occupations and demonstrate the collaboration of employers, employees and educational institutions. Trainees may not displace currently employed workers or replace laid-off workers. The training may not last more than 26 weeks and must be accompanied by classroom-based vocational and/or remedial education.

At least 75 percent of the trainees in an approved project must be undertrained, underemployed, or unemployed. A minimum of 25 percent must be current or recent recipients of public assistance. Training grants may not exceed \$1,500 per trainee.

The ratio requirements of apprentices to certified journeyman electricians, or speciality electricians do not apply to electrical construction trade school programs approved by the Work Force Training and Education Coordinating Board.

Successful completion of a trade or technical school electrical construction program approved by the Work Force Training and Education Coordinating Board qualifies one to take the journeyman electrician's or the speciality electrician's examinations.

A nonresident applicant for a certificate of competency must possess equivalent qualifications to those required for resident applicants.

Apprentice workers must be paid the prevailing journey level wage if they are employed upon public works projects and are not in an apprenticeship program approved by the State Apprenticeship Council or the federal bureau of apprenticeship and training.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 28, 1997.

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

Testimony For: Work-based learning is an important tool for transitioning to work. This bill will allow more apprenticeships. Federally approved apprentices should be allowed to work on state public works projects.

Testimony Against: Existing councils might be able to do the on-the-job training council's work. The electrical apprenticeship sections of the bill moves away from increased on-the-job training. The changes to the current apprenticeship situation could result in the exploitation of apprentices.

Testified: Ellen O'Brien Saunders, Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board; Larry Stevens, Nat. Electrical Contractors Association; PRO: Duke Schaub, Associated General Contractors; Sandra Olson, Construction Industry Training Council; Gary Smith, Independent Business Association; CON: Bob Dilger, WA Building Trades Council; Richard King, International Brotherhood of Electrical Unions; Jeff Johnson, WA State Labor Council; Suzanne Mager, L&I.