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**SENATE BILL 5524**

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**State of Washington 64th Legislature 2015 Regular Session**

**By** Senators Sheldon, Rivers, Parlette, Angel, Bailey, Becker, Warnick, Honeyford, Brown, Dammeier, and Conway

AN ACT Relating to enhancing the employment of persons with disabilities; adding a new section to chapter 43.41 RCW; and creating new sections.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  The legislature finds that seven percent of the state's population consists of persons with disabilities, that persons with disabilities suffer significantly higher rates of unemployment and underemployment than in the general population, and that representation of disabled persons in the state workforce has declined in recent years. The legislature further finds that there is no policy similar to Schedule A in the federal civil service system for priority hiring of persons with disabilities. The legislature further finds that state government human resource managers do not coordinate with the department of social and health services' division of vocational rehabilitation or division of services for the blind regarding opportunities to employ persons with disabilities. Therefore, the legislature intends to increase the hiring of persons with disabilities in the state workforce.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 43.41 RCW to read as follows:

(1) By January 31st of each year, state agencies employing one hundred or more people must submit a report to the human resources director within the office of financial management, with copies to the director of the department of social and health services' division of vocational rehabilitation and the governor's committee on disabilities and employment.

(2) The report must include the following information:

(a) The number of employees during the previous calendar year;

(b) The number of employees classified as individuals with disabilities;

(c) The number of employees that separated during the state agency the previous year;

(d) The number of employees that were hired by the state agency during the previous year;

(e) The number of employees hired from a division of vocational rehabilitation services or from the division of the services for the blind program during the previous year;

(f) The number of planned hires for the current year; and

(g) Opportunities for internships for a division of vocational rehabilitation or division of the services for the blind client placement leading to an entry-level position placement upon successful completion for the current year.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  This act may be known and cited as the state employment disability parity act.

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