

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SSB 6544

As Passed House:
March 2, 2018

Title: An act relating to establishing the future of work task force.

Brief Description: Establishing the future of work task force.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Ways & Means (originally sponsored by Senators Chase, Brown, Hasegawa, Wagoner, Wellman, Takko and Conway).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Higher Education: 2/20/18, 2/23/18 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 3/2/18, 50-48.

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Establishes the Future of Work Task Force, supported by the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board, to address issues related to changes in technology, industry, and the workforce.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 6 members: Representatives Hansen, Chair; Pollet, Vice Chair; Haler, Orwall, Sells and Tarleton.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 2 members: Representatives Holy, Ranking Minority Member; Van Werven, Assistant Ranking Minority Member.

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

Staff: Trudes Tango (786-7384).

Background:

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

The Workforce Training & Education Coordinating Board (Workforce Board) is a Governor-appointed partnership of members from businesses, labor, and government. Among other things, the Workforce Board evaluates the performance of, and coordinates and monitors, the state's workforce programs as a whole.

In a 1999 executive order, the Governor directed the Workforce Board to work with business, labor, state agencies, and local workforce development councils to develop strategies addressing, among other things, the following challenges:

- closing the gap between employer need for skilled workers and the supply of Washington residents prepared to meet that need; and
- enabling workers to make smooth transitions so they may fully benefit from the new, changing economy.

Summary of Bill:

The Future of Work Task Force (task force) is created to:

- inventory and assess trends and factors that are drivers of the transformation of industries and work;
- identify policies and practices to help the state's businesses, workers, and communities thrive economically while responding to changes in technology, workplace practices, and other issues;
- recommend mechanisms and structures for sustainable industry sector partnerships; and
- create a policy framework to support a talent development pipeline and lifelong learning structure that, among other things:
 - prepares young people to navigate careers and workplaces of the future;
 - helps workers keep up-to-date skills or helps retrain workers when needed;
 - enables attainment of credentials that are portable and transferable;
 - provides opportunities for instructional staff to keep pace with changes; and
 - allows collaborative research between business, instructional staff, and students.

The task force must consist of:

- two members from the House of Representatives (one appointed from each of the two major caucuses);
- two members from the Senate (one appointed from each of the two major caucuses); and
- six business representatives and six labor representatives, appointed by the Workforce Board.

The Workforce Board may contract with research advisors to carry out the duties of the task force. The task force may not meet more than four times per year.

The task force expires on June 30, 2020.

Under the direction of the task force and subject to amounts appropriated, the Workforce Board must:

- develop and maintain an inventory of current and future trends and factors that drive transformation of industries and work in the state over the next 25 years;
- research the best and promising practices from state, national, and international sources, and develop case examples;
- gather input from employers and workers from major industrial sectors in the state, using surveys and community forums and ensuring every region of the state is consulted;
- identify relevant metrics and recommend a possible dashboard for tracking success and addressing the future of work issues;
- consult with public and nonprofit organizations that support businesses or their workforce to identify barriers that hinder those organizations' ability to effectively support business and workforce development in a transformational environment;
- make initial recommendations and a research design report describing the plan and methods to be used by the task force by December 31, 2018; and
- report to the appropriate committees of the Legislature and the Governor on task force activities and recommendations by December 1, 2019.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed. However, the bill is null and void unless funded in the budget.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) The Legislature is responsible for developing public policy that responds to current conditions and prepares the state for the future. A number of jobs will soon be obsolete due to digitization and robotics. This bill will help the Legislature make good public policy in response to the rapid changes happening in the workforce. The education sector needs data, not just another dashboard. There are many workforce education programs and plans, but they need to be knitted together. Getting actual data and case studies will help policymakers and those in the system understand how to integrate all the existing programs.

(Opposed) None.

(Other) Although this bill is not reflected in the Governor's budget, it is a good concept. The Workforce Board is the appropriate agency to do this work and will be able to directly engage with legislators under this bill.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Senator Chase, prime sponsor; and Katherine Mahoney, State Board for Community and Technical Colleges.

(Other) Eric Wolf, Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.