

FINAL BILL REPORT

SB 6471

C 121 L 18

Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Developing model policies to create workplaces that are safe from sexual harassment.

Sponsors: Senators Keiser, Walsh, Rolfes, Dhingra, Bailey, Darneille, Hasegawa, Frockt, Conway, Chase, Kuderer and Saldaña.

Senate Committee on Labor & Commerce
House Committee on Labor & Workplace Standards

Background: The Human Rights Commission (HRC) enforces and administers the Washington Law Against Discrimination (WLAD). Under the WLAD, a person has the right to be free from discrimination related to a protected status, such as race, national origin, sex, veteran or military status, sexual orientation, and disability. An employer may not discriminate against a person because of one's protected status. Sexual harassment is a form of sex discrimination under the WLAD.

Summary: The HRC must convene a work group to develop model policies and best practices for employers and employees to keep workplaces safe from sexual harassment. The HRC must adopt model policies and best practices developed by the work group and post the model policies and best practices on its website by January 1, 2019. Within 30 days of the HRC adopting model policies and best practices, the Department of Labor and Industries must post the policies and best practices on its website.

To the extent practicable, the work group should have membership from the following groups:

- the business community;
- human resource professionals;
- advocates for the survivors of sexual harassment;
- labor organizations;
- representatives of farmworkers;
- representatives from agricultural industries; and
- other subject matter experts as deemed necessary by the HRC.

In developing best practices, the work group should consider:

- how workplace leaders can signal commitment to stopping sexual harassment;

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- how to create and protect anonymous reporting channels;
- how to ensure human resource departments are accountable for enforcing sexual harassment policies;
- how to protect against retaliation;
- providing the opportunity for employees to establish affinity groups to share concerns and provide mentoring regarding sexual harassment;
- the use of exit and employee engagement surveys to improve retention and promote an inclusive work environment;
- using new employee orientation to emphasize inclusion and sexual harassment prevention and using required training for all employees in a classroom environment;
- evaluating executives and supervisors on their efforts to support an inclusive workplace and prevent sexual harassment; and
- how to create an internal communication plan for communicating a commitment to inclusion and sexual harassment prevention.

Votes on Final Passage:

Senate	48	0	
House	98	0	(House amended)
Senate	49	0	(Senate concurred)

Effective: June 7, 2018