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**SUBSTITUTE HOUSE BILL 1355**

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**State of Washington 66th Legislature 2019 Regular Session**

**By** House College & Workforce Development (originally sponsored by Representatives Ortiz-Self, Orwall, Ryu, Sells, Macri, Entenman, Stonier, Valdez, Frame, Gregerson, Tarleton, Doglio, Dolan, Appleton, Bergquist, Slatter, Goodman, Pollet, and Santos)

AN ACT Relating to establishing staffing standards and ratios for counselors in community and technical colleges; creating a new section; and providing an expiration date.

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

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  (1) A joint legislative task force on community and technical college counselors is created to examine issues related to staffing ratios and standards of counselors in the community and technical college system.

(2) The members of the task force are as provided in this subsection.

(a) The president of the senate shall appoint two members from each of the two largest caucuses in the senate.

(b) The speaker of the house of representatives shall appoint two members from each of the two largest caucuses of the house of representatives.

(c) The president of the senate and the speaker of the house of representatives shall jointly appoint the following members:

(i) Four counselors employed by community and technical colleges. At least two of the counselors must be members of the exclusive bargaining representatives that represent counselors; and

(ii) One student of a community and technical college.

(d) The governor shall appoint the following members:

(i) One member representing the state board for community and technical colleges;

(ii) Two presidents from two community and technical colleges, or the presidents' designees who have authority to speak on behalf of the colleges; and

(iii) Two vice presidents from two community and technical colleges. One must be a vice president of student services and one must be a vice president of instruction.

(3) The task force shall choose cochairs from among its legislative membership and may rotate cochairs from each chamber and each caucus.

(4) The task force shall examine the following issues:

(a) Minimum standards required for counselors, including requirements regarding the level of education, internship experience, practical experience, and content of coursework required;

(b) Best practices for counseling services in the community and technical college system and how the colleges will meet the mental health needs of students and qualified staff members;

(c) Staffing ratios of counselors and students, including considering issues raised by a staffing ratio of no more than nine hundred students to one full-time equivalent counselor; and

(d) Whether legislation is needed to address the issues outlined in this subsection.

(5) Staff support for the task force shall be provided by the senate committee services and the house of representatives office of program research.

(6) Legislative members of the task force must be reimbursed for travel expenses in accordance with RCW 44.04.120. Nonlegislative members, except those representing an employer or organization, are entitled to be reimbursed for travel expenses in accordance with RCW 43.03.050 and 43.03.060.

(7) The expenses of the task force must be paid jointly by the senate and the house of representatives. Task force expenditures are subject to approval by the senate facilities and operations committee and the house of representatives executive rules committee or their successor committees.

(8) The task force shall submit its findings and recommendations to the appropriate committees of the legislature by November 1, 2020. The findings must include data on each community and technical college's student-to-counselor ratio.

(9) This section expires December 1, 2020.

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