

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2455

As Reported by House Committee On:
Human Services & Early Learning

Title: An act relating to supporting access to child care for parents who are attending high school or working toward completion of a high school equivalency certificate.

Brief Description: Supporting access to child care for parents who are attending high school or working toward completion of a high school equivalency certificate.

Sponsors: Representatives Kilduff, Eslick, Senn, Ryu, Kloba, Valdez, Bergquist, Davis, Pollet, Goodman and Wylie; by request of Office of Financial Management.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Human Services & Early Learning: 1/17/20, 1/28/20 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Allows Working Connections Child Care eligibility for a parent attending high school or pursuing a high school equivalency who has an income at or below 85 percent of the state median income.
- Requires school districts to provide transportation upon request for parenting students who are transporting an infant.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES & EARLY LEARNING

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 9 members: Representatives Senn, Chair; Callan, Vice Chair; Frame, Vice Chair; Eslick, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Goodman, Griffey, Kilduff, Lovick and Ortiz-Self.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 4 members: Representatives Dent, Ranking Minority Member; McCaslin, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Corry and Klippert.

Staff: Dawn Eychaner (786-7135).

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.

Working Connections Child Care.

The Working Connections Child Care (WCCC) program is a subsidized child care program administered by the Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF). To receive authorizations for 12 months of child care subsidy, eligible families must have household incomes at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty guidelines (FPG) at the time of application. Two-hundred percent of the 2019 FPG is \$42,660 for a household of three.

The WCCC program is partially funded by the federal Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF). The CCDF rules allow states to set the maximum household income eligibility for child care subsidy at 85 percent of the state's median income (SMI). In Washington, 85 percent of the SMI is \$65,520 for a household of three.

Depending on income and household size, the participant may be required to pay a copayment to their child care provider. A participant pays the minimum copayment of \$15 per month when he or she is a minor parent and is either a recipient of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) or part of his or her parent or relative's TANF assistance unit.

The DCYF determines household size based on criteria adopted in rule. For a single parent, including a minor parent living independently, the DCYF counts the parent and the children in the household. If both parents are living in the household, both parents are counted and must be working or participating in a DCYF-approved activity to qualify for the WCCC. Approved activities may include satisfactory attendance at a high school or a high school equivalency program.

School District Transportation.

School districts may provide for the transportation of school children and school employees using school buses and drivers hired by the district, commercially chartered bus services, or through a pupil transportation services contract with a private nongovernmental entity. School districts may, when approved by the superintendent of an educational service district, approve payment for individual transportation arrangements for an eligible student.

Federal motor vehicle safety standards (FMVSS) adopted by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration regulate motor vehicle restraint systems for children as well as safety requirements for school buses. The FMVSS require small school buses and school-chartered buses with a gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) of 10,000 pounds or less to have lap/shoulder seat belt assemblies. For large school buses with a GVWR of more than 10,000 pounds, seat belts are not required under federal rules.

State law requires a child to be properly secured in a rear-facing child restraint system until the child is 2 years old or reaches the weight or height limit of the child restraint system set by the manufacturer. State child restraint system laws do not apply to school buses.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

Working Connections Child Care.

The DCYF must authorize full-day WCCC during the school year for a parent who is attending high school, or a parent who is age 21 or younger and working toward completing a high school equivalency certificate, when the parent has a household income of no more than 85 percent of the state median income. The parent must participate in at least 110 hours of an approved activity per month in order to receive full-day care.

When determining eligibility, the DCYF may not consider the availability of the other biological parent when authorizing care and may not require the parent to pay a copayment.

School District Transportation.

By July 1, 2021, at the request of an eligible student, a school district may allow the student to transport an infant on a school bus or other district transportation. The infant must be transported in a rear-facing child restraint system.

If the district denies a student request to transport the infant by bus, the district must authorize other arrangements for the student's transportation. An "eligible student" is defined as any student served by the transportation program of a school district or compensated for individual transportation arrangements whose route stop is outside the walk area for a student's school, except if the student to be transported is disabled.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The substitute bill requires a parent who is working toward a high school equivalency certificate to be age 21 or younger to qualify for the WCCC under the provisions of the bill. The substitute bill removes the requirement for the DCYF to treat the parent as his or her own household when determining household income.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 29, 2020.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) It can be hard to be a teenager in high school and adding parenting to that equation makes it even more complex. This bill has a singular focus of helping parenting students to finish high school. There is an intergenerational component to this policy that helps break the cycle of poverty and promotes self-sufficiency. This policy removes major barriers to students trying to achieve educational goals after they become parents. Asking grandparents to take on child care costs for their grandchildren is not always feasible, nor is relying on the other biological parent. This is common-sense two-generation poverty reduction strategy. The state's youngest moms and dads are also some of the most vulnerable high school students. It is important to remember these young parents are still adolescents. A simplified approach to child care assistance will smooth the path for these parents.

Schools do a good job supporting students whose needs are academic, but sometimes the biggest barriers students have are those that can be met through human services. The main barriers facing these students are having access to child care and reliable transportation.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Kilduff, prime sponsor; Michelle Spenser, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction; Sydney Forrester, Office of the Governor; Melanie Smith, Washington Anti-Poverty Advocates Group; and Allison Krutsinger, Department of Children, Youth, and Families.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.