

SENATE BILL REPORT

SSB 5633

As of Third Reading

Title: An act relating to supporting and expanding behavioral health workforce pathway programs.

Brief Description: Supporting and expanding behavioral health workforce pathway programs.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Ways & Means (originally sponsored by Senators Brown, Walsh, Becker, Hasegawa, Zeiger, Keiser and O'Ban).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Behavioral Health Subcommittee to Health & Long Term Care: 2/21/19, 2/22/19 [DP-WM].

Ways & Means: 2/26/19, 2/27/19 [DPS].

Brief Summary of First Substitute Bill

- Requires appropriated funds to be spent for supporting and expanding behavioral health workforce academic and career pathway programs.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SUBCOMMITTEE TO HEALTH & LONG TERM CARE

Majority Report: Do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators Dhingra, Chair; Wagoner, Ranking Member; Darneille and Frockt.

Staff: Kevin Black (786-7747)

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5633 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Rolfes, Chair; Frockt, Vice Chair, Operating, Capital Lead; Mullet, Capital Budget Cabinet; Braun, Ranking Member; Brown, Assistant Ranking Member, Operating; Honeyford, Assistant Ranking Member, Capital; Bailey, Becker, Billig, Carlyle, Conway, Darneille, Hasegawa, Hunt, Keiser, Liias, Palumbo, Pedersen, Rivers, Schoesler, Van De Wege, Wagoner, Warnick and Wilson, L..

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.

Staff: Travis Sugarman (786-7446)

Background: An Area Health Education Center (AHEC) is a federally-funded entity that is created to develop and implement strategies to recruit individuals from underrepresented minority populations or from disadvantaged or rural background into health professions, and support such individuals in attaining careers. Washington State is home to two AHECs that receive annual funding from the University of Washington and Department of Health (DOH). These organizations target students in high school and college with programs designed to inspire students and prepare them to enter training to participate in health professions. Mental Health First Aid is offered to increase awareness of behavioral health among health professionals, educators, and community members, and continuing education and mentorship is offered to health professionals.

Whatcom Community College is the site of the AHEC for western Washington. Eastern Washington University is the home of the eastern Washington AHEC.

Summary of First Substitute Bill: DOH must provide appropriated funds to eastern and western Washington AHECs for the purpose of supporting and expanding current behavioral health workforce academic and career pathway programs.

Appropriation: The bill contains a section or sections to limit implementation to the availability of amounts appropriated for that specific purpose.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony on Original Bill (Behavioral Health Subcommittee to Health & Long Term Care): PRO: There is a need to expand pathways for mental health and behavioral health. We had another youth suicide in my district yesterday morning. We need individuals who are trained and ready to go into our communities and schools. There is a general shortage of behavioral health professionals around the country. Demand for behavioral health care is rising rapidly. The disease burden of mental health and substance use disorders was higher than for any other health condition in 2015. The shortage of psychiatrists is an escalating crisis. This bill will help. Most students begin their practice in debt. We need to recruit people into this field.

Persons Testifying (Behavioral Health Subcommittee to Health & Long Term Care): PRO: Senator Sharon Brown, Prime Sponsor; Seth Dawson, Washington State Psychiatric Association.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying (Behavioral Health Subcommittee to Health & Long Term Care): No one.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony on Original Bill (Ways & Means): *The committee recommended a different version of the bill than what was heard.* PRO: This appropriation is a small amount to increase our behavioral health workforce in this state.

Persons Testifying (Ways & Means): PRO: Senator Sharon Brown, Prime Sponsor.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying (Ways & Means): No one.