
Community & Economic Development Committee

HB 1170

Brief Description: Building economic strength through manufacturing.

Sponsors: Representatives Boehnke, Paul, Walsh, Kloba, Shewmake, Santos, Springer, Dolan, Dye, Graham, Leavitt, McCaslin, Young, Walen, Riccelli, Bateman, Lovick, Lekanoff, Eslick, Frame, Barkis, Sutherland, Robertson and Dent.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Establishes a state goal for Washington to consistently have the highest share of workforce involved in manufacturing and research and development (R&D) occupations of any state.
- Provides that the Department of Commerce (Department) is responsible for implementing the goal.
- Requires the Department to conduct certain activities in support of achieving the goal, including convening stakeholders, establishing regional offices, assessing remote manufacturing workforce training challenges, and issuing reports to the Legislature.

Hearing Date:

Staff: Kyle Raymond (786-7190).

Background:

The Department of Commerce (Department) is responsible for growing and improving jobs in Washington, facilitating innovation, and streamlining access to business assistance and economic development services by providing them through sector-based, cluster-based, and regional

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partners. Industry clusters targeted by Commerce include aerospace, agriculture, food manufacturing, clean technology, information and communication technology, forest products, life science, global health, maritime, and military and defense sectors. The Department employs sector leads that work with public officials and industry representatives to promote public-private partnerships, enhance workforce development in targeted industries, and advance strategies that support small business growth and expansion.

Summary of Bill:

A state goal is established for Washington to consistently have the highest share of workforce involved in manufacturing and research and development (R&D) occupations of any state in the United States. The Department of Commerce (Department) is responsible for implementing the state's goal.

The Department is required to convene manufacturing and R&D stakeholders each fiscal biennium for the purpose of compiling a report to the Legislature detailing the progress made towards achieving the state goal. In addition, the report must identify policy obstacles hindering the advancement of the state goal and provide recommendations.

The Department is required to establish regional offices that are staffed with a lead coordinator. The lead coordinator of the regional office is responsible for establishing a research and manufacturing industrial council, identifying and expanding capacity for local skill centers, and promoting and fostering skilled trade learning programs.

The Department is required to coordinate with the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction and the State Board for Community and Technical College to assess any inadequacy or gaps in delivering remote hands-on, skills-based manufacturing workforce training.

The Department is required to convene stakeholders to obtain information about experiences of lost opportunity during the COVID-19 pandemic related to workforce training that resulted from closures or limitations at on-site and in-person training facilities. The Department must provide a report to the legislature with recommendations on how Washington can be the world leader in best practices for delivering remote learning opportunities adapted to the manufacturing workplace.

The Department is required to report to the Legislature on the feasibility of forming both a state manufacturing office and a state research and development office to support the attainment of the state manufacturing goal.

The Department must employ a sector lead for general manufacturing, and a sector lead for R&D, while the Department maintains its key sector economic development organizational focus.

In pursuit of the state goal, the Department may expend resources to feature and promote a

particular innovation, product, or industry subclassification. The Department may not discriminate against or fail to use best efforts on behalf of any lawful manufacturing or R&D activity that seeks to employ Washingtonians.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 14, 2021.

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