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**HOUSE BILL 1502**

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**State of Washington 68th Legislature 2023 Regular Session**

**By** Representatives Berry, Gregerson, Simmons, Walen, Reeves, Doglio, Macri, Reed, Ortiz-Self, Riccelli, and Fosse

AN ACT Relating to studying the impacts of job protection on the utilization of paid family medical leave benefits; and creating a new section.

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

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  (1) Subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this specific purpose, the University of Washington, through the Evans School of Public Policy and Governance, shall conduct a study on the impacts of the state family and medical leave program's job protection standards on equitable utilization of paid leave benefits under the program.

(2) At a minimum, the study must assess the following:

(a) The rates at which paid leave benefits under chapter 50A.15 RCW are used by persons who qualify for job protection under RCW 50A.35.010 or the federal family and medical leave act;

(b) Worker perspectives on the effects of job protection under RCW 50A.35.010 and the federal family and medical leave act on the use of paid leave benefits under chapter 50A.15; and

(c) Employment outcomes and other impacts for persons using paid leave benefits under chapter 50A.15 RCW.

(3)(a) In conducting the study, the university must collect original data directly from workers about paid leave and job protection, including demographic information such as race, gender, income, geography, primary language, and industry or job sector.

(b) In developing the study, the university must consult with the advisory committee under RCW 50A.05.030, including the following briefings: An overview on the initial research design with an opportunity to provide feedback; a midpoint update; and final results. The university must consult with the committee regarding appropriate methods for collecting and assessing relevant data in order to protect the reliability of the study.

(c) The university may use a combination of private and public resources to design and conduct the study.

(4) For the purposes of facilitating the study under this section, the employment security department must:

(a) Enter into a data-sharing agreement with the university in accordance with RCW 50A.25.070(3); and

(b) Provide technical assistance to, and consult with, the university as necessary.

(5) The university must submit a preliminary report, including the initial research design and available preliminary results, by December 1, 2023, and a final report by December 1, 2024, to the governor and the appropriate policy and fiscal committees of the legislature, in accordance with RCW 43.01.036.

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