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**ENGROSSED SENATE BILL 6296**

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**State of Washington 68th Legislature 2024 Regular Session**

**By** Senators Boehnke and Dozier

AN ACT Relating to establishing a retail industry work group; creating a new section; and providing an expiration date.

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

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A 2023 report examining the future of the retail workforce in Washington state found that prioritizing ways to reduce turnover and increase internal promotion would offer benefits to both employers and workers simultaneously. To accomplish this, the report recommends the standardization of the credentials, degrees, and postsecondary awards that are of benefit to individuals in the retail industry as well as identifying credential pathways toward academic degrees and state-registered apprenticeship programs that would support a retail career path.

(1) The state board for community and technical colleges shall establish a retail work group consisting of higher education, business, labor, and workforce development representatives with expertise in the retail workforce. The work group shall identify and report to the legislature by October 1, 2025, the following:

(a) Degrees, certificates, state-registered apprenticeship programs, and education programs of value to the retail workforce;

(b) Gaps in educational opportunities and skill development in existing academic programs;

(c) Best practices in program design and curriculum for high quality credentials in support of the retail sector;

(d) Career pathways for individuals in the retail sector with a focus on stackable credentials; and

(e) Any barriers individuals face in attaining high quality credentials in support of a retail career.

(2) The work group shall recommend up to four colleges for pilot programs for short-term credentials and microcredentials in support of the retail workforce. These pilot programs must be designed with the best practices from subsection (1) of this section.

(3) "State-registered apprenticeship program" means an approved apprenticeship program under chapter 49.04 RCW that has been approved to participate in state financial aid programs.

(4) This section expires July 1, 2026.

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