

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SHB 2216

As Passed House:
February 8, 2024

Title: An act relating to reducing barriers to state employment by eliminating two-year and four-year degree requirements that are unnecessary.

Brief Description: Reducing barriers to state employment by eliminating two-year and four-year degree requirements that are unnecessary.

Sponsors: House Committee on State Government & Tribal Relations (originally sponsored by Representatives Cheney, Leavitt, Walen, Santos, Couture, Graham, Reed, Rude and Davis).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

State Government & Tribal Relations: 1/24/24, 1/30/24 [DPS].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 2/8/24, 96-1.

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Specifies that the classification plan for classified service employees may not require a two-year or four-year college degree as the only way to demonstrate qualifications for a role unless that degree is required by law.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT & TRIBAL RELATIONS

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 7 members: Representatives Ramos, Chair; Stearns, Vice Chair; Cheney, Ranking Minority Member; Christian, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Gregerson, Low and Mena.

Staff: Carter Gale (786-7290) and Jason Zolle (786-7124).

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Background:

The Office of Financial Management maintains a classification plan for all positions in the classified service. Classified employees are those subject to the civil service statute. The classification plan consists of the titles, definitions, typical work, legal requirements, and desirable qualifications for all categories of jobs within the State of Washington.

The classification plan must be based on a review and analysis of duties and responsibilities of each position, and it must include a description of each class. The plan is prepared and revised in consultation with employers, employee organizations, and other interested parties.

By statute, the plan must:

- be simple and streamlined;
- support state agencies in responding to changing technologies, economic and social conditions, and the needs of its citizens;
- value workplace diversity;
- facilitate the reorganization and decentralization of governmental services;
- enhance mobility and career advancement opportunities; and
- consider rates in other public employment and private employment in the state.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

The classification plan may not include requirements for a two-year or four-year college degree as the only way to demonstrate qualifications for a role unless that degree is required by law.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) This is an important workforce development bill. There are many job candidates who are as qualified as those with college degrees but are ineligible for certain positions because they lack degrees. These positions may go unfilled, and the state is less able to do its work because of understaffing. This bill also promotes inclusive and diverse hiring. Many high school graduates are unable to pursue college degrees due to barriers such as cost and a lack of time. Removing unnecessary degree requirements allows these candidates access to the workforce, and they can use those opportunities to further their professional development.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Greg Cheney, prime sponsor; Arthur West; K.D. Chapman-See, Office of Financial Management; and Joe Wilcox, Workforce Board.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.