

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 2216

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
State Government & Elections, February 20, 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: Passed House: 2/8/24, 96-1.

Committee Activity: State Government & Elections: 2/15/24, 2/20/24 [DP].

Brief Summary of 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.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT & ELECTIONS

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Hunt, Chair; Valdez, Vice Chair; Wilson, J., Ranking Member; Dozier, Fortunato, Hasegawa and Kuderer.

Staff: Danielle Creech (786-7412)

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

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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 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.

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: PRO: Washington State and employers continue to feel the impact of the great resignation and the challenges of ensuring we attract and retain a highly skilled work force. Allowing us to remove the degree requirements as the only way to meet qualifications for a job as posted will identify multiple pathways for applicants to demonstrate they have the skills and competencies to do the job. This will allow for the expansion of applicant pools while still adhering to the standards and competencies necessary to do the job well.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Chelsea Lee, Office of Financial Management.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.