

FINAL BILL REPORT

ESB 6296

C 43 L 24
Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Establishing a retail industry work group.

Sponsors: Senators Boehnke and Dozier.

Senate Committee on Higher Education & Workforce Development
Senate Committee on Ways & Means
House Committee on Postsecondary Education & Workforce

Background: Washington Retail Workforce Report. A 2023 report on the Washington retail workforce found the industry has a turnover rate in excess of 60 percent. Among other things, the report recommends improving career advancement opportunities with stacking of credentials toward academic degrees as one potential solution.

Microcredentials. Microcredentials are short, focused credentials designed to provide in-demand skills, know-how, and experience and may include competency-based skill recognition. Stackable microcredentials may provide a pathway to a certificate or full degree, now or when a person is ready.

Summary: The State Board for Community and Technical Colleges must establish a retail workgroup consisting of higher education, business, labor, and workforce development representatives with expertise in the retail industry. The workgroup must report on the following to the appropriate committees of the Legislature by October 1, 2025:

- educational and state-registered apprenticeship programs of value to the retail workforce;
- gaps in education opportunities and skill development within existing academic programs;
- best practices in program design for high quality credentials in support of the retail sector;
- career pathways and stackable credentials for individuals in the retail sector; and
- barriers individuals face in attaining high quality credentials in support of a retail career.

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.

The workgroup must recommend up to four colleges to pilot programs for short-term credentials and microcredentials in support of the retail workforce.

Votes on Final Passage:

Senate 49 0

House 95 0

Effective: June 6, 2024