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**HOUSE BILL 2406**

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**State of Washington**

**68th Legislature**

**2024 Regular Session**

**By** Representatives Connors, Rude, Hutchins, Walen, Klicker, Caldier, Ybarra, Chapman, Jacobsen, Barkis, Paul, Eslick, Taylor, Dent, Sandlin, Schmidt, Nance, Springer, and Graham

Read first time 01/17/24. Referred to Committee on Labor & Workplace Standards.

1 AN ACT Relating to establishing a work group to assess the  
2 restrictions on the employment of 16 and 17 year olds; and creating  
3 new sections.

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

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** (1) The legislature finds that the state,  
6 in partnership with employers and the public school system, has  
7 developed and invested in preparatory secondary career and technical  
8 education programs for high school students. These programs have been  
9 developed and expanded with the intent of providing high school  
10 students with hands-on work experience, coupled with education and  
11 training to work in various industries throughout our state. Many of  
12 these programs are designed to allow students to begin working in the  
13 field in conjunction with participating in training. Field work  
14 opportunities can bridge the gap between high school and entering the  
15 workforce, thereby helping students succeed following graduation.  
16 However, many employers are unable or unwilling to hire 16 and 17  
17 year old students participating in these programs due to extensive  
18 laws and rules governing the employment of minors. This includes, for  
19 example, restrictions on when students can work and the job duties  
20 they are able to perform. Some of these state laws and rules go  
21 beyond what is required by federal law.

1 (2) Therefore, the legislature hereby directs the department of  
2 labor and industries to convene a work group to review existing laws,  
3 rules, and agency policies, and develop recommendations for changes  
4 to such laws, rules, and policies in order to enhance the  
5 employability of 16 and 17 year old students, with a particular focus  
6 on students who are participating in or who have completed a  
7 preparatory secondary career and technical education program and want  
8 to begin working, while also protecting their safety and welfare.

9 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** (1) The department of labor and industries  
10 must convene a work group for the purposes of assessing the current  
11 restrictions on the employment of 16 and 17 year old minors. The work  
12 group shall provide recommendations on any necessary policy changes  
13 to those restrictions in order to improve access to career  
14 development opportunities, particularly for minors participating in  
15 preparatory secondary career and technical education programs, while  
16 also maintaining appropriate protections for their safety and  
17 welfare.

18 (2) In developing recommendations required by this section, the  
19 work group shall assess the following:

20 (a) Process for obtaining minor work permits;

21 (b) Categories of prohibited work, focusing on those categories  
22 where minors can access related training through preparatory  
23 secondary career and technical education programs or other programs;

24 (c) Hours and scheduling restrictions, including the  
25 accessibility of the current variance process;

26 (d) Procedures for obtaining permission to work from local school  
27 districts;

28 (e) Wages; and

29 (f) Relevant insurance issues.

30 (3) To the extent practicable, the following entities, groups,  
31 and interests should be represented in the work group:

32 (a) Department of labor and industries;

33 (b) Office of the superintendent of public instruction;

34 (c) State board for community and technical colleges;

35 (d) Career connect Washington and the career connected learning  
36 cross-agency work group under RCW 28C.30.030;

37 (e) Workforce training and education coordinating board;

38 (f) Washington state skills center association;

1 (g) Representatives of interested business and employer  
2 associations and organizations;

3 (h) Representatives of interested labor organizations in relevant  
4 trades; and

5 (i) Representatives of other interested entities, groups, and  
6 interests identified by the department of labor and industries.

7 (4) The department of labor and industries may initiate changes  
8 to agency rules and practices based on recommendations of the work  
9 group prior to the issuance of the required reports and any related  
10 legislative action in order to appropriately expand access to career  
11 opportunities for 16 and 17 year old minors, provided that any such  
12 changes comply with federal and state law.

13 (5) The work group must submit to the appropriate committees of  
14 the legislature, in accordance with RCW 43.01.036, an initial report  
15 with recommendations by December 1, 2024, and a final report with  
16 recommendations by October 1, 2025. The recommendations may include  
17 proposals to modify state laws and department rules and practices.  
18 The reports shall also include a summary of any changes to department  
19 rules and practices initiated or completed as a result of the work  
20 group's findings and recommendations.

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