

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5944

AS OF MARCH 12, 1991

Brief Description: Improving the state's human resource systems.

SPONSORS: Senator Hayner.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Staff: Terry Wilson (786-7715)

Hearing Dates: March 11, 1991

BACKGROUND:

The Department of Personnel and the Higher Education Personnel Board have centralized regulatory control over personnel action. The boards are independent rule-making, management, and quasi-judicial boards. The Personnel Board has statutory budget authority over the Department of Personnel. The Governor appoints the Director of Personnel from a list of three names submitted by the board.

When vacancies occur in civil service positions, the five highest rated applicants on the eligibility list are certified to the agency for each vacancy (the rule of five). For layoffs, current law requires the most senior person on the layoff list to be referred to an agency for rehiring after a layoff.

SUMMARY:

The Department of Personnel is renamed the Department of Personnel and Human Resources. The director would be appointed by the Governor, with the approval of the Personnel Board and with Senate confirmation. The director could be removed by the Governor with board approval. The director would have the budget authority for the department.

The Washington Management Service is established as part of the state civil service in both the state agency and higher education systems. Included in the service are employees with substantial responsibilities for management of programs and supervision of employees, executive policy formulation, and carrying out functions relating to personnel or labor relations, legislative relations, or public information. Separate personnel rules are to be adopted for classified management employees designed to:

- (a) Simplify movement between agencies and promote upward mobility;

- (b) Provide a flexible compensation system;
- (c) Provide a performance appraisal system emphasizing accountability;
- (d) Strengthen management training and career development;
- (e) Permit flexible recruitment and hiring; and
- (f) Provide for discipline only for cause.

The College Career Entry Program is established. Separate rules are to be adopted governing recruitment, announcements, examinations, and employment registers designed to permit agencies to make timely and firm employment offers in a competitive recruitment environment. The program is limited to 25 percent of the vacant entry level positions requiring a college degree and no experience.

Separate rules are to be adopted governing recruitment, announcements, examinations, and employment registers designed to permit agencies to make timely and firm employment offers to persons with sought-after skills for hard-to-fill positions.

For positions requiring specialized skills, the most senior person on the layoff list with those skills would be referred to an agency for rehiring. If no one has the skills, the rule of five would be used.

A policy is established to create an organizational culture in state government that respects and values individual differences and encourages the productive potential of every employee.

As provided by rule of the appropriate board, the Directors of the Personnel Board and the Higher Education Personnel Board may approve uncontested personnel actions.

Appropriation: none

Revenue: none

Fiscal Note: requested March 11, 1991

Effective Date: July 1, 1992

TESTIMONY FOR:

Current law is outdated. We need to develop modern management methods and strong professional managers in the civil service. It streamlines the personnel system and provides greater flexibility.

TESTIMONY AGAINST:

The Governor appoints the director now. The civil service serves all elected officials, not just the Governor. Everything the bill provides in management flexibility can be done under current law. Management training can be done by administrative rules. The goal of the bill is to eliminate competitive examination. Patronage will return to state government. The bill will make 8,700 management positions exempt from competitive hiring.

TESTIFIED: Wendy Holden, Director, Department of General Administration (pro); Dee Henderson, Department of Personnel (pro); John Spitz, Higher Education Personnel Board (pro); Gary Moore, WA Federation of State Employees (con)