

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2041

As Reported by House Committee On:
Children & Family Services

Title: An act relating to "work activity" for purposes of the temporary assistance for needy families program.

Brief Description: Clarifying the work study aspect of "work activity" under the TANF program.

Sponsors: Representatives Kenney, Boldt, Lantz, Clements, McCoy, Fromhold, Berkey, Morrell and Kagi.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Children & Family Services: 3/3/03, 3/4/03 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Expands work activity under the WorkFirst program to include the accompanying education program along with employment through the state or federal work-study program.
- Provides that students working the maximum state or federal work-study offered to them by their educational institution must be considered full-time WorkFirst participants.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICES

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 9 members: Representatives Kagi, Chair; Darneille, Vice Chair; Boldt, Ranking Minority Member; Roach, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Bailey, Dickerson, Miloscia, Pettigrew and Shabro.

Staff: Cynthia Forland (786-7152).

Background:

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) is the federal program that replaced the Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) program under federal welfare reform. TANF provides block grants to states that are used to provide assistance and

work programs for needy families. Washington created its WorkFirst program in order to complete implementation of federal welfare reform legislation. The WorkFirst program utilizes federal TANF funds, along with state funds, to develop and deliver services for needy families.

WorkFirst participants who receive TANF cash assistance are required to participate full-time in a work activity. The definition of "work activity" includes subsidized paid employment in the private or public sector, including employment through the state or federal work-study program, for a period not to exceed 24 months. In order to satisfy the full-time requirement, a participant must work 16 or more hours a week in the state or federal work-study program, regardless of the number of hours offered by the educational institution, and must attend a state community or technical college at least half-time.

Working Connections Child Care (WCCC) is a child care subsidy program within the WorkFirst program that helps families with children pay for child care to find jobs, keep their jobs, and get better jobs. WorkFirst participants who meet the requirements for participation in a work activity are eligible for up to 16 hours per day of WCCC benefits. For those WorkFirst participants who are employed through the state or federal work-study program, their eligibility for hours of WCCC benefits is calculated according to a combination of the following: the number of hours worked in the work-study program, the number of hours in class, and an allotted number of hours of study time.

Summary of Bill:

The inclusion of employment through the state or federal work-study program within the definition of "work activity" is expanded to include the accompanying education program.

In addition, students who work the maximum state or federal work-study offered to them by their educational institution while attending the accompanying education program must be considered full-time WorkFirst participants.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: WorkFirst participants are facing difficult times, and are facing many barriers to success. The education program must be taken into consideration. Work-study funds are rarely sufficient to allow 16 hours of work each week for the full

year. WorkFirst participants who cannot work the full 16 hours cannot qualify for child care. Education is essential for WorkFirst participants to get beyond dead-end jobs. In the long run, helping WorkFirst participants get an education will save money.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Representative Kenney, prime sponsor; Carrie L. Day and Bethe Eichler, Welfare Rights Organizing Coalition; and Jade and Stella Suza, Citizens.