
**Higher Education & Workforce
Education Committee**

HB 2583

Brief Description: Regarding community and technical college part-time academic employee health benefits.

Sponsors: Representatives Kenney, Cox, Conway, Hasegawa, Roberts, Appleton, Upthegrove, Morrell, Linville, Hunt, Dickerson and Ormsby.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Maintains health care benefits for part-time academic employees at community and technical colleges, providing the employees establish and maintain a workload pattern.

Hearing Date: 1/20/06

Staff: Nina Oman (786-7152).

Background:

Part-time academic employees at community and technical colleges who work half-time or more are currently eligible for health benefits beginning the second quarter they are employed half-time or more. They are also currently eligible for health benefits over the summer quarter even if they work under half-time, as long as they have worked half-time or more in three of the four quarters preceding summer.

However, if an employee works under half-time for one quarter, that employee loses benefit coverage for that quarter as well as for the following summer quarter.

Summary of Bill:

A workload pattern is defined to allow for maintenance of state-mandated health insurance for part-time academic employees in community and technical colleges in quarters where they fall below half-time employment, provided they maintain an average of half-time employment over the academic year.

In order to establish a workload pattern and be considered eligible for health insurance, an academic employee must:

- work two consecutive years of employment that averages half time or more; and
- be employed at some level in at least three out of four quarters of the academic year.

Academic employees who have established a workload pattern are considered eligible for health care benefits as long as their workload continues to average half-time or more when calculated using any three of the four quarters in an academic year. Employees meeting this workload pattern maintain eligibility for health benefits during any one quarter where the workload is less than half-time and during the subsequent summer quarter.

The workload pattern is broken when the workload for that employee averages less than 50 percent over an academic year, excluding summers. An academic employee who loses workload pattern eligibility by falling below the workload requirement for one full academic year may self pay under the terms of the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA), and may have benefits reinstated the first quarter in which half-time or more employment is attained, as long as that occurs within 18 months. A new workload pattern may then be established.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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