

SENATE BILL REPORT

2SHB 2583

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Labor, Commerce, Research & Development, February 21, 2006
Ways & Means, March 7, 2006

Title: An act relating to community and technical college part-time academic employee health care benefits.

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

Sponsors: House Committee on Appropriations (originally sponsored by Representatives Kenney, Cox, Conway, Hasegawa, Roberts, Appleton, Upthegrove, Morrell, Linville, Hunt, Dickerson and Ormsby).

Brief History: Passed House: 2/09/06, 98-0.

Committee Activity: Labor, Commerce, Research & Development: 2/20/06, 2/21/06 [DPA-WM, w/oRec].
Ways & Means: 3/7/06 [DP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON LABOR, COMMERCE, RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT

Majority Report: Do pass as amended and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.
Signed by Senators Kohl-Welles, Chair; Franklin, Vice Chair; Brown, Keiser and Prentice.

Minority Report: That it be referred without recommendation.
Signed by Senators Parlette, Ranking Minority Member and Honeyford.

Staff: Alison Mendiola (786-7483)

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Majority Report: Do pass.
Signed by Senators Prentice, Chair; Fraser, Vice Chair, Capital Budget Chair; Doumit, Vice Chair, Operating Budget; Fairley, Kohl-Welles, Pridemore, Rasmussen, Regala and Thibaudeau.

Staff: Paula Faas (786-7449)

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 the summer quarter.

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: Sections are added to the Health Care Authority statutes that describe health care benefit coverage for part-time academic employees at community and technical colleges.

Part-time academic employees at community and technical colleges who have established eligibility for health care benefits are eligible for continuation of their health care benefits over the summer if they have worked an average of half-time or more in each of the preceding two academic years through employment at one or more community or technical college districts.

Uninterrupted health care benefits for part-time academic employees at community and technical colleges are maintained as long as the employee continues to work at least three of the four quarters of the academic year with an average academic workload of half-time or more.

Continuous health care benefit coverage ceases at the end of the academic year if the employee has not maintained at least a half-time average academic workload over three of the four quarters of the academic year.

Labor, Commerce, Research & Development Amended Bill Compared to Original Bill: The amended bill changes the definition of "academic year" to include only the Fall, Winter, and Spring quarters and language that reads "three of the four quarters" is changed to read "two of the three quarters." An emergency clause is added and other technical changes are made.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: This bill reflects worked out language among the parties. The emergency clause is necessary so current eligible employees will continue to receive health care benefits this summer. This bill stems from a settlement (*Mader v. Health Care Authority*) which was originally filed in the late 90s and just settled in 2004, so it's been a long road. Given the discrepancies between the full-time and part-time faculty pay, it is crucial that the part-time faculty at least have access to full health care coverage.

Testimony Against: None.

Who Testified: PRO: Representative Phyllis Kenney, Prime Sponsor; John Bosenberg, State Board of Community and Technical Colleges; Dennis Martin, Health Care Authority; Wendy Rader-Konofalski, AFT-WA; Nat Hong, Olympic College; Keith Hoeller, WA Part-Time Faculty Association; Doug Collins, WA Part-Time Faculty Association; Dana Rush, WA Part-Time Faculty Association.