
**Early Learning & Children's
Services Committee**

HB 2312

Brief Description: Providing legislative oversight of WorkFirst and temporary assistance to needy families.

Sponsors: Representatives Walsh, Kagi, Morrell and Kenney.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Creates the WorkFirst Oversight Committee.

Hearing Date: 2/23/07

Staff: Sydney Forrester (786-7120).

Background:

WorkFirst is Washington state's welfare-to-work strategy. Washington initiated the WorkFirst program in August 1997 to help low-income families become self-sufficient by providing training and support services necessary for parents to get a job, keep a job and move up a career ladder.

Four state agencies jointly carry out WorkFirst: the Department of Social and Health Services; the Employment Security Department; the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges; and the Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development. Local employers, tribal governments, Workforce Development Councils and community organizations are key partners in planning and providing services for WorkFirst participants.

When WorkFirst began in 1997, it was decided that the heads of the partner agencies listed above would form the WorkFirst Subcabinet. The Subcabinet is chaired by the Director of the Office of Financial Management and meets several times a year to coordinate and make decisions about high-level policy and budget issues. The WorkFirst program manages approximately \$830 million annually.

Summary of Bill:

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

The WorkFirst Oversight Committee (Committee) is established for the purpose of monitoring the state's effectiveness in promoting personal responsibility among recipients and in helping them attain long-term self-sufficiency. The Committee consists of four legislators, one from each major caucus in each chamber of the Legislature, and the members of the WorkFirst Subcabinet. The Committee will meet quarterly and will receive written reports on a monthly or quarterly basis related to:

- (1) work participation rates;
- (2) the number of persons who left WorkFirst and entered the workforce;
- (3) the number of persons enrolled in post-employment support programs;
- (4) the percentage increase in earnings capacity for recipients who exited WorkFirst and entered the workforce;
- (5) the number of persons in sanction status for nonparticipation; and
- (6) program expenditures in each major activity.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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