

ESSB 6149 - H COMM AMD

By Committee on General Government & Information Technology

NOT ADOPTED 03/04/2016

1 Strike everything after the enacting clause and insert the  
2 following:

3 "NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** A new section is added to chapter 43.10  
4 RCW to read as follows:

5 (1) An employer must provide reasonable accommodations to an  
6 employee for a pregnancy-related or childbirth-related health  
7 condition if so requested, with written certification from a licensed  
8 health care provider, unless the employer demonstrates that the  
9 accommodation would impose an undue hardship on the operation of the  
10 employer's business. The employee must provide written notice to the  
11 employer stating that a health condition related to pregnancy or  
12 childbirth requires accommodation.

13 (2) Notwithstanding subsection (1) of this section, an employee  
14 who is pregnant or has a health condition related to pregnancy or  
15 childbirth shall not be required to obtain the advice of a licensed  
16 health care provider, nor may an employer claim undue hardship, for  
17 the following accommodations: (a) More frequent, longer, or flexible  
18 restroom, food, and water breaks; (b) seating; and (c) limits on  
19 lifting over twenty pounds.

20 (3) The employee and employer shall engage in an interactive  
21 process with respect to an employee's request for a reasonable  
22 accommodation.

23 (4) Notwithstanding any other provision of this section, an  
24 employer shall not be required to create a new or additional position  
25 in order to accommodate an employee pursuant to this section, and  
26 shall not be required to discharge any employee, transfer any other  
27 employee with greater seniority, or promote any employee.

28 (5) An employer shall not require an employee who has a  
29 pregnancy-related or childbirth-related health condition to accept an  
30 accommodation, if such accommodation is unnecessary to enable the  
31 employee to perform the job.

32 (6) An employer shall not:

1 (a) Take adverse action against an employee who requests or uses  
2 an accommodation under this section that affects the terms,  
3 conditions, or privileges of employment;

4 (b) Deny employment opportunities to an otherwise qualified  
5 employee if such denial is based on the employer's need to make  
6 reasonable accommodation required by this section; or

7 (c) Require an employee to take leave if another reasonable  
8 accommodation can be provided for the employee's pregnancy-related or  
9 childbirth-related health condition.

10 (7) This section does not preempt, limit, diminish, or otherwise  
11 affect any other provision of law relating to sex discrimination or  
12 pregnancy, or in any way diminish or limit the coverage for  
13 pregnancy, childbirth, or a pregnancy-related health condition.

14 (8) The definitions in this subsection apply throughout this  
15 section unless the context clearly requires otherwise.

16 (a) "Employee" means an individual employed by an employer.

17 (b) "Employer" has the same meaning as RCW 49.60.040(11).

18 (c) "Reasonable accommodation" includes, but is not limited to:

19 (i) Making existing facilities used by employees readily  
20 accessible to and usable by employees who have a pregnancy-related or  
21 childbirth-related condition;

22 (ii) Job restructuring, part-time or modified work schedules,  
23 reassignment to a vacant position, acquisition or modification of  
24 equipment or devices, or appropriate adjustment or modifications of  
25 examinations;

26 (iii) Temporary transfer to a less strenuous or hazardous  
27 position;

28 (iv) Limits on heavy lifting;

29 (v) Scheduling flexibility for prenatal and postnatal visits.

30 (d) "Undue hardship" means an action requiring significant  
31 difficulty or expense.

32 (9) The attorney general shall investigate complaints and enforce  
33 this section. The attorney general may issue civil investigative  
34 demands for the inspection of documents, interrogatory responses, and  
35 oral testimony in the enforcement of this section. The attorney  
36 general may seek all appropriate relief in the superior courts for  
37 violations of this section, including costs and a reasonable  
38 attorneys' fee. In addition to the complaint process with the  
39 attorney general, any aggrieved person injured by any act in  
40 violation of this section has a civil cause of action in court to

1 enjoin further violations, or to recover the actual damages sustained  
2 by the person, or both, together with the cost of suit including  
3 reasonable attorneys' fees or any other appropriate remedy authorized  
4 by state or federal law."

5 Correct the title.

EFFECT: Changes the definition of employer to reference the definition used in the Washington Law Against Discrimination (employers with eight or more employees but not nonprofit religious or sectarian organizations).

Changes the definition of "reasonable accommodation" to: (1) Make it a nonexclusive list; (2) provide that making existing facilities accessible and usable is an accommodation for a pregnancy-related or childbirth-related "condition" rather than "disability"; and (3) add scheduling flexibility for postnatal visits, not just prenatal visits, to the list of what constitutes reasonable accommodation.

Removes the requirement for the Department of Labor and Industries to post information in a printable format and include information in required workplace posters regarding employer and employee rights and responsibilities.

Provides the Attorney General certain subpoena powers to enforce the provisions and allows the Attorney General to seek all appropriate relief in court, including costs and reasonable attorneys' fees.

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