

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5098

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Early Learning & K-12 Education, February 17, 2015
Ways & Means, February 27, 2015

Title: An act relating to increased efficiency in child care reporting.

Brief Description: Increasing efficiency in child care reporting.

Sponsors: Senators Billig, Litzow, Jayapal and McAuliffe.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Early Learning & K-12 Education: 1/26/15, 2/17/15 [DPS-WM].
Ways & Means: 2/25/15, 2/27/15 [DP2S, w/oRec].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5098 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators Litzow, Chair; Dammeier, Vice Chair; McAuliffe, Ranking Member; Billig, Fain, Hill, Mullet, Rivers and Rolfes.

Staff: Ailey Kato (786-7434)

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Majority Report: That Second Substitute Senate Bill No. 5098 be substituted therefor, and the second substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Hill, Chair; Dammeier, Vice Chair; Hargrove, Ranking Member; Keiser, Assistant Ranking Member on the Capital Budget; Ranker, Ranking Minority Member, Operating; Bailey, Billig, Brown, Conway, Fraser, Hasegawa, Hatfield, Hewitt, Kohl-Welles, O'Ban, Rolfes and Warnick.

Minority Report: That it be referred without recommendation.

Signed by Senators Braun, Vice Chair; Honeyford, Vice Chair, Capital Budget Chair; Becker, Padden, Parlette and Schoesler.

Staff: Breann Boggs (786-7433)

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.

Background: The Working Connections Child Care (WCCC) program offers subsidies to childcare providers serving families at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty level. In this program, the state pays part of the cost of childcare when a parent is employed, self-employed, or meets the requirements for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families or WorkFirst programs.

The Department of Early Learning sets child care subsidy policy and provides WCCC oversight for child care licensing and early learning services. The Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) helps families apply for WCCC, determines eligibility and consumer copayments, authorizes child care, and pays providers.

Current law states that a WCCC subsidy is effective for 12 months unless a change in circumstances necessitates reauthorization sooner than 12 months. It also requires that a WCCC applicant or recipient notify DSHS within ten days about any significant change related to the number of child care hours the applicant or recipient needs, cost sharing, or eligibility.

Summary of Bill: The bill as referred to committee not considered.

Summary of Bill (Recommended Second Substitute): As recommended by federal law, authorizations for a WCCC subsidy must be effective for 12 months unless a change of circumstance necessitates reauthorization sooner than 12 months. No later than November 1, 2016, DEL must establish and implement policies that provide WCCC authorizations for up to three 30-day periods when a recipient experiences a gap in the recipient's employment or approved activity.

A WCCC applicant or recipient no longer must notify DSHS within ten days about any significant change related to the number of child care hours the applicant or recipient needs, cost sharing, or eligibility.

The combined effect of these changes is that households that experience gaps in their employment or approved activities will no longer lose coverage, as long as the employment or approved activity gap does not exceed three 30-day periods.

EFFECT OF CHANGES MADE BY WAYS & MEANS COMMITTEE (Recommended Second Substitute): No later than November 1, 2016, the department must provide WCCC households three 30-day periods of continued child care to cover gaps in the client's employment or approved activity. This is as recommended by Public Law 113-186.

EFFECT OF CHANGES MADE BY EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION COMMITTEE (Recommended First Substitute): An intent section is added. A reference to federal law is added. A provision is added that requires DEL to establish and implement policies for 12-month WCCC authorization no later than November 1, 2016. A technical change is made.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available. New fiscal note requested on March 3, 2015.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony on Proposed Substitute as Heard in Committee (Early Learning & K-12 Education): PRO: The continuity of care provisions in this bill, which are also part of the Early Start Act, are important. WCCC helps parents go from welfare to work or school, and it also helps kids and helps close the opportunity gap. Many vulnerable families who want or need child care are terminated from WCCC and children's lives are disrupted. Terminations may occur because of medical reasons or seasonal work. This bill promotes efficiency. This bill keeps families in WCCC and saves administrative expenses for processing terminations and reapplications.

Persons Testifying (Early Learning & K-12 Education): PRO: Senator Billig, prime sponsor; Melissa Johnson, WA State Assn. of Headstart & Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program programs; Jennifer Jennings Shaffer, Children's Alliance.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony on Substitute as Passed by Early Learning & K-12 Education (Ways & Means): PRO: We support SB 5098 for improved educational outcomes for all children. The bill streamlines bureaucracy and red tape and helps parents maintain their child care so they can work. We are in favor of increasing continuity of care for children. I support 12-month authorization because it would give subsidized children stability of care.

Persons Testifying (Ways & Means): PRO: Laurie Lippold, Partners for Our Children; David Foster, Alliance of YMCA's and Kinder Care; Patricia Dickason, League of Women Voters, WA; Stacey Torrance, WA Dental Service Foundation; Steve Leahy, Ready Nation; Jennifer Jennings-Shaffer, Children's Alliance, Early Learning Action Alliance; Lani Todd, Service Employees International Union 925; Jim Cooper, United Ways of the Pacific NW; Melanie Smith, Wellspring Family Services; David Beard, Schools Out WA; Jon Naegle, WA Assn. for the Education of Young Children; Donna Christensen, WA State Catholic Conferences; Ryan Pricco, Child Care Aware of WA; Colleen Laing, United Way of King County; Vicki Christophersen, Stand for Children; Roxana Norouzi, OneAmerca; Suzie Hanson, WA Federation of Independent Schools.