

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SHB 1521

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As Reported by Senate Committee On:  
State Government, March 29, 2017

**Title:** An act relating to removing the requirement that an employee must work at least six months before taking vacation leave.

**Brief Description:** Addressing vacation leave.

**Sponsors:** House Committee on State Govt, Elections & IT (originally sponsored by Representatives Dolan, Doglio, Ormsby, Appleton, Bergquist and Pollet; by request of Office of Financial Management).

**Brief History:** Passed House: 3/01/17, 65-33.

**Committee Activity:** State Government: 3/29/17 [DP-WM, w/oRec].

### Brief Summary of Bill

- Allows employees to use leave at any time.
- Changes the leave accrual from days to hours.
- Requires employees work at least six continuous months to have the ability to cash out any accrued vacation leave.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT

**Majority Report:** Do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators Miloscia, Chair; Zeiger, Vice Chair; Hunt, Ranking Minority Member; Kuderer.

**Minority Report:** That it be referred without recommendation.

Signed by Senator Pearson.

**Staff:** Melissa Van Gorkom (786-7491)

**Background:** The Legislature established a leave system for state employees in 1921. State employees receive at least one day of paid vacation leave per month after being in state employment for six months. Employees whose employment is terminated by their death,

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reduction in force, resignation, dismissal, or retirement who have accrued vacation leave may cash out their leave under their contract of employment. State employees may accrue no more than 30 working days of unused vacation leave unless an employee's request for vacation leave is deferred by reason of the convenience of the employer, in which case the accrued unused vacation leave shall be extended for each month the leave was deferred.

**Summary of Bill:** State employees may use leave at any time if they have an adequate leave balance.

Employees would be allowed to accrue:

- no less than eight hours, instead of one day, of vacation leave with full pay for each month; and
- no more than 240 hours, instead of 30 working days, of unused vacation leave.

Employees must work at least six continuous months to have the ability to cash out any accrued vacation leave.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members:** No.

**Effective Date:** The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect on July 1, 2017.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:** PRO: The bill will make the state of Washington a more friendly employer by giving employees the ability to use the vacation time they have already earned. This issue came up during collective bargaining. These changes allow employees to deal with unforeseen circumstances during their first month of employment and make Washington State more marketable for recruitment and retention. The bill also clarifies days worked to hours so that there is uniformity across employees which will make it easier to manage the workforce.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Representative Laurie Dolan, Prime Sponsor; Scott Merriman, Office of Financial Management; Seamus Petrie, Washington Public Employees Association; Dennis Eagle, WA Federation of State Employees.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:** No one.