

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 5689

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As of January 8, 2018

**Title:** An act relating to establishing a statewide policy supporting Washington state's economy and immigrants' role in the workplace.

**Brief Description:** Establishing a statewide policy supporting Washington state's economy and immigrants' role in the workplace.

**Sponsors:** Senators Wellman, Saldaña, Nelson, Keiser, Hasegawa, McCoy, Carlyle, Pedersen, Chase, Ranker, Conway, Darneille and Kuderer.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Commerce, Labor & Sports: 2/16/17.

### Brief Summary of Bill

- Enacts the Keep Washington Working Act.
- Establishes a Keep Washington Working Statewide Steering Committee to: develop strategies to support industries across the state; conduct research on methods to strengthen careers for skilled immigrants; support various organizations in an effort to provide the agriculture industry with a stable workforce; and make recommendations.
- Requires the Attorney General to publish model policies for limiting immigration enforcement to the fullest extent possible consistent with the law.
- Restricts the use of state resources to assist in unconstitutional or illegal registration or surveillance programs or any other unconstitutional or illegal laws, rules, or policies targeting Washington residents on the basis of race, religion, immigration, or citizenship status, or national or ethnic origin.
- Restricts agencies and other departments from using their resources or transferring or detaining an individual to federal immigration authorities absent a proper warrant.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, LABOR & SPORTS

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*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.*

**Staff:** Susan Jones (786-7404)

**Background:** The Legislature has recognized:

- that Washington is one of the most productive growing regions in the country;
- that Washington's agriculture is an integral part of this state's economic health; and
- the agricultural industry's need for skilled workers and the workers' need in upgrading their agricultural skills and marketability; and
- that providing skills and safety training for Washington agricultural workers helps ensure their success and safety and helps to ensure the continued success of Washington's agricultural industry.

In 2002, the Homeland Security Act was enacted and established the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS). In 2003, the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) was established as DHS' investigative agency and is charged with administering the nation's immigration system. In addition, DHS's Priority Enforcement Program (PEP) enables DHS to work with state and local law enforcement to take custody of certain individuals before they are released.

**Summary of Bill:** The Keep Washington Working Act is enacted. A Keep Washington Working Statewide Steering Committee (committee) must be established within the Department of Commerce. The committee must:

- develop strategies to support current and future industries across the state;
- conduct research on methods to strengthen career pathways for skilled immigrants and work on partnerships with projected growth industries;
- support business and agriculture leadership, civic groups, government, and immigrant advocacy organizations in a statewide effort to provide the agriculture industry with a predictable and stable workforce; and
- recommend approaches to improve Washington's ability to attract and retain immigrant business owners that provide new business and trade opportunities.

The committee must consist of representatives from diverse immigrant advocacy groups, professional associations representing business, labor organizations, agriculture and immigrant legal interests, faith-based community nonprofit organizations, legal advocacy groups, academic institutions, and law enforcement. The committee must meet at least six times a year in various locations and report to the Governor after each meeting.

The Attorney General must publish, within three months after the effective date, model policies for limiting immigration enforcement to the fullest extent possible consistent with federal and state law at public schools, state operated health facilities, courthouses, and shelters, to ensure they remain safe and accessible to all Washington residents, regardless of immigration or citizenship status. All state facilities and courthouses must implement the policy. All other organizations are encouraged to adopt the policy.

All state agencies must, within six months after the effective date, review their confidentiality policies and identify any changes necessary to ensure that information collected is limited to that necessary to perform agency duties and is not used or disclosed for any other purpose. Any necessary changes to those policies must be made as expeditiously as possible, consistent with agency or department procedures. These policies must make clear that public

employees may not condition services or request information or proof regarding a person's immigration or citizenship status, or place of birth, except as required by law. The policies must also ensure that public services are available to, and public employees must serve, all Washington residents without regard to immigration or citizenship status.

No state agency or department, including law enforcement, may:

- use agency or department resources to investigate, enforce, cooperate with, or assist in the investigation or enforcement of any unconstitutional or illegal registration or surveillance programs or any other unconstitutional or illegal laws, rules, or policies that target Washington residents on the basis of race, religion, immigration, or citizenship status, or national or ethnic origin; or
- make databases available to anyone for the purpose of immigration enforcement or investigation or enforcement of any federal program requiring registration of individuals on the basis of race, religion, immigration, or citizenship status, or national or ethnic origin.

State and local law enforcement agencies and school police and security departments may not use their resources to investigate, interrogate, detain, detect, or arrest persons for immigration enforcement purposes, and may not transfer an individual to federal immigration authorities for purposes of immigration enforcement or detain an individual at the request of federal immigration authorities absent a judicial warrant establishing probable cause to believe that the person has committed a criminal offense. This does not prevent these agencies from responding to a request from federal immigration authorities for information about a specific person's previous criminal arrests or convictions where permitted by state law or from responding to a lawful subpoena.

Legislature findings are made. Definitions are provided for various terms. Sections are repealed.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Requested on February 15, 2017.

**Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members:** Yes.

**Effective Date:** The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:** PRO: This is a bill is intended to keep Washington working and our economy thriving. Immigrants play a vital part in our state's economy. One in every 7 employees is an immigrant. Thirty-three percent of Microsoft employees in Washington are here on work visas. Seventy-five top employees are from countries listed in the recent executive order. Hearing that Microsoft is considering moving these employees to Canada and expanding their footprint there because of a potentially hostile work environment in Washington state was deeply troubling.

Immigrant communities are living in fear, harassed openly, and children afraid that their parents will be ripped from their families. Law abiding immigrants should never fear interacting with their government, especially state and local government, or in the education

community. Immigration policy is the national government's purview and should not be the state's.

The bill is a job bill that will keep Washingtonians working without disruption. Immigrants make contributions to all sectors of Washington's economy, including service, food processing, education, high tech, hospitality, agriculture, health care, retail, and building, construction, and infrastructure. Our state is dependent on our exports to foreign countries, business travel, and tourism. We have heard a lot of employer concerns about the impact federal policies are having on their businesses.

Washington is one of the top agricultural exporters in the country. We are concerned that without the protections of this act, Washington's agricultural labor supply, which is heavily dependent on immigrant communities, will collapse, causing food prices to skyrocket and significantly limit growers abilities to plant, harvest, and sell their food. The combined effect of high prices and food supply scarcity will be devastating.

Restaurant employees, whether they immigrated here yesterday or generations ago, are critical to our industry success and in our state's economic success. In Washington state, 23% of the restaurant industry's workforce are born outside of the United States. Creating the Keep Washington Working Steering Committee will allow us to continue to hire, promote, and advance our valuable employees, strengthening our businesses, our economy, and our communities.

This bill would do a lot for foreign educated immigrants. Research from the Migration Policy Institute indicates that approximately 32% of adult immigrants in Washington state come with internationally obtained degrees and tens of thousands of these degrees are not being utilized. This is brain waste. It's bad for our economy and our communities.

Public education is a civil right. The bill requires that every school district in the state have a policy to keep every public school safe and accessible to all Washington residents regardless of immigration status or citizen status; districts aren't forced to use funding for something other than education; or schools are not used to interrogate, detain, or arrest students and families for immigration enforcement purposes. The School Directors Association has a policy that clearly delineates the necessary relationship between law enforcement and schools and in order to best protect students and avoid disruptions in their learning environments. This bill adds clarification and eases fears of our students.

This bill would help immigrant students by supporting them once they finish college in the future and also helps them now with their immigrant families who are either working on their own or own their own businesses. It will also encourage more students who are immigrants to stay within the state for work. By ensuring stability in the immigrant workforce and stopping harassment and profiling, we can create a climate where people are successful and productive. We must treat our immigrant workforce like native born citizens with respect and security.

CON: This bill conflates lawful immigration with entering and remaining in this country illegally and unconstitutional registries on the basis of race or religion with enforcement of lawful immigration statutes. This bill would cripple enforcement of reasonable and lawful

immigration enforcement. We are a nation of laws. Our Constitution grants the federal government, not the individual states, the responsibility for setting immigration policy. We should comply with both the letter and spirit of the Constitution by supporting the federal government in enforcement of immigration laws and not seek to circumvent or abet the violation of those laws. While I hope that our country will continue to be a beacon of hope for refugees and other immigrants, I also believe that the entry of immigrants may be regulated and is important for national security that those wishing to live here be screened prior to entry. By concealing those who enter unlawfully, it would make it more difficult for the federal government to do this job.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Senator Lisa Wellman, Prime Sponsor; Vy Nguyen, OneAmerica; Kim Mead, Washington Education Association; Will Rice, Vice-President, Catholic Community Services; Paul Benz, Faith Action Network; Jorge Baron, Northwest Immigrant Rights Project; Julia Gorton, Washington Hospitality Association; Jessica Vavrus, Washington State School Directors' Association; Bob Cooper, Washington Defender Association; Christina Wong, Northwest Harvest; Jahkari Aujla-Singh, Associated Students of Bellevue College/External Legislative Affairs Representative; Jimmy Matta, Latino Civic Alliance.

CON: Rebecca Faust.

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