

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2308

As Reported by House Committee On: Labor & Workplace Standards

Title: An act relating to requiring employers to periodically report standard occupational classifications or job titles of workers.

Brief Description: Requiring employers to periodically report standard occupational classifications or job titles of workers.

Sponsors: Representatives Slatter, Tharinger, Wylie and Appleton.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Labor & Workplace Standards: 1/13/20, 1/23/20 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires employers to include occupational data of its employees in the employer's quarterly tax reports to the Employment Security Department.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON LABOR & WORKPLACE STANDARDS

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 4 members: Representatives Sells, Chair; Chapman, Vice Chair; Gregerson and Ormsby.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 3 members: Representatives Mosbrucker, Ranking Minority Member; Chandler, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Hoff.

Staff: Trudes Tango (786-7384).

Background:

Employment Security Department Reports.

The Employment Security Department (ESD) administers the state's unemployment benefits program. Employers must file tax reports with the ESD every quarter. The reports must contain the name of all employees covered by unemployment insurance, their social security numbers, their wages, and the number of hours worked in the quarter.

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.

Employers may file electronically or use paper forms. An employer is subject to escalating penalties for failing to file a report or for filing an incomplete report. The ESD issues a warning letter for the first violation. For subsequent violations, the penalties range from \$75 to \$250.

Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board.

The ESD has data-sharing agreements with the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board (Workforce Board). The Workforce Board matches student-level records with the ESD's wage records to evaluate performance outcomes for a number of workforce and postsecondary education programs.

Standard Occupational Classification.

The Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) system is a federal system used by federal agencies to classify workers into occupational categories.

Summary of Bill:

Employers must include the SOC or job title of each worker in their quarterly tax reports to the ESD.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 8, 2020.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect on October 1, 2021.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) This will ensure that students have accurate information when making decisions and preparing for their careers. Washington tracks training and education programs using labor market data and finding out which careers graduates enter into is key to data collection. The data is not publicly available and would remain confidential. Other states, like Alaska and Indiana, and other countries, already collect this data. This will help Washington businesses find the right talent.

(Opposed) The SOC has over a hundred pages of codes and descriptions. This will be onerous on the employers who have to figure out, especially when their employees do multiple tasks or are seasonal workers. It is unclear what process is in place if the Workforce Board disagrees with the way an employee is classified. There are concerns that the additional data being collected could lead to identity theft and fraud. This bill would require collecting data on employees whether or not they ever participated in a training program. This may not necessarily help employers fill positions.

(Other) Getting better access to occupational data is a priority for the Workforce Board. This is not included in the Governor's budget but it is a valuable policy. This policy was a recommendation from the Future of Work Task Force. Having this data will allow the Workforce Board to track whether students get a job in the field they were trained for. Current data is incomplete and inaccurate, which results in jobs in certain sectors not being accurately counted.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Representative Slatter, prime sponsor.

(Opposed) Patrick Connor, National Federation of Independent Business.

(Other) Lisa Perry, Sierra Pacific; and Marina Parr and Dave Wallace, Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.