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**HOUSE BILL 2487**

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**State of Washington 68th Legislature 2024 Regular Session**

**By** Representatives Lekanoff, Shavers, and Nance

AN ACT Relating to education and assistance for displaced farmworkers; adding a new section to chapter 28B.12 RCW; adding a new section to chapter 28C.04 RCW; adding a new section to chapter 28B.145 RCW; adding a new section to chapter 28B.50 RCW; adding a new section to chapter 28B.117 RCW; adding a new section to chapter 28B.115 RCW; adding a new section to chapter 28B.103 RCW; adding a new section to chapter 28B.122 RCW; and adding a new chapter to Title 28B RCW.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  The farmworkers education and assistance program is created. The purpose of the program is to:

(1) Help farmworkers who have been or will be displaced from their jobs in the agricultural industry learn about postsecondary educational opportunities;

(2) Provide outreach to farmworkers to educate them on existing scholarship and grant opportunities available to Washington residents; and

(3) Provide technical support and wraparound services to farmworkers pursuing postsecondary educational opportunities.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  The definitions in this section apply throughout this chapter unless the context clearly requires otherwise.

(1) "Apprentice" means a person enrolled in a state-approved, federally registered, or reciprocally recognized apprenticeship program.

(2) "Apprenticeship" means an apprenticeship training program approved or recognized by the state apprenticeship council or similar federal entity.

(3) "Farmworker" means a Washington resident who is an agricultural employee or farm labor contractor as defined in RCW 19.30.010.

(4) "Institution of higher education" means an institution of higher education as defined in RCW 28B.10.016 or a degree-granting institution as defined in RCW 28B.85.010 that participates in the state student financial aid program.

(5) "Office" means the office of student financial assistance.

(6) "Preapprenticeship" means an apprenticeship preparation program recognized by the state apprenticeship council and as defined in RCW 28C.18.162.

(7) "Program" means the farmworkers education and assistance program created in this chapter.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  (1) The office shall design and, subject to funds appropriated for this specific purpose, implement the program. The program must use both English and Spanish, be culturally appropriate, and offer support for displaced farmworkers to enhance awareness of existing grants and scholarships, as well as educational and apprenticeship opportunities, for students who are farmworkers who are or will be displaced from the agricultural industry.

(2) The office shall convene and consult with an advisory committee to assist with program design and implementation. The committee must include:

(a) Farmworkers who have been displaced from their jobs in the agricultural industry;

(b) A representative from the state board for community and technical colleges;

(c) Student support specialists from public and private colleges and universities;

(d) A representative from the state workforce training and education coordinating board;

(e) A representative of the employment security department; and

(f) A member of the state apprenticeship council.

(3) The office, in consultation and with assistance from the state board for community and technical colleges, shall identify students and apprentices who are current or former farmworkers so that those students and apprentices may receive assistance under the program. In designing and implementing the program under this section, the office, in consultation and with assistance from the state board for community and technical colleges, shall ensure that institutions of higher education have a plan for identifying students and apprentices who are eligible for assistance under this program, for tracking and enhancing their academic progress, for addressing their unique needs, and for linking them to appropriate sources of assistance in their transition from farmworker to student and beyond.

(4) The office shall define a process for verifying a student's or apprentice's status as a farmworker.

(5) Subject to amounts appropriated for this specific purpose, institutions of higher education must receive financial and other incentives for achieving measurable progress in the recruitment, retention, and graduation of eligible students and apprentices.

(6) All institutions of higher education shall include on their applications for admission or on their registration materials a question asking whether the applicant has been a farmworker, with an explanation that financial and support services may be available.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  (1) To the extent funds are appropriated for this purpose, the office shall develop and maintain an internet website and outreach program available in English and Spanish to serve as a comprehensive portal for farmworkers in Washington who are or will be displaced from the agricultural industry to obtain information regarding higher education and registered apprenticeship and recognized preapprenticeship programs. In developing the website and conducting the outreach program, the office shall get input from community and technical colleges; displaced farmworkers; institutions of higher education; the employment security department; the state apprenticeship and training council; the workforce training and education coordinating board; the department of licensing; and the department of labor and industries. The outreach program and website must include, but is not limited to:

(a) Academic, social, family, financial, and logistical information important to successful postsecondary educational success;

(b) How and when to obtain and complete college applications;

(c) How and when to apply for a registered apprenticeship or recognized preapprenticeship program;

(d) What academic subject matter prerequisites, if any, are generally required for acceptance to an institution of higher education, a registered apprenticeship, or a recognized preapprenticeship program;

(e) What college placement tests, if any, are generally required for admission to college and when and how to register for such tests;

(f) How and when to obtain and complete a federal free application for federal student aid or if ineligible to apply for the federal free application for federal student aid, the state financial aid application approved by the office; and

(g) Detailed sources of financial aid and assistance likely available to farmworkers in Washington.

(2) The office shall determine whether to design, build, and operate the outreach program and website directly or to use, support, and modify existing websites created by government or nongovernmental entities for a similar purpose.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  (1) The office shall partner with organizations that serve community and provide social services and general assistance, such as the national community action partnership, to develop the farmworkers seeking education to career program. The farmworkers seeking education to career program shall include a navigator with bilingual capacity.

(2) Services offered must include:

(a) Supporting clients, including displaced farmworkers;

(b) Addressing and explaining required academic and financial forms required for apprenticeships and postsecondary educational opportunities;

(c) Information on available scholarships and grants; and

(d) One-on-one appointments with the navigator to discuss career paths and outreach resources.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 28B.12 RCW to read as follows:

Ten percent of funds available for the state work-study program must be reserved for students who are farmworkers as defined in section 2 of this act and who otherwise meet the requirements for state work-study.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 28C.04 RCW to read as follows:

Ten percent of funds available for the Washington award for vocational excellence must be reserved for students who are farmworkers as defined in section 2 of this act and who otherwise qualify for the award.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 28B.145 RCW to read as follows:

Ten percent of funds available for the opportunity scholarship must be reserved for students who are farmworkers as defined in section 2 of this act and who otherwise qualify for the scholarship.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 28B.50 RCW to read as follows:

Ten percent of funds available for the opportunity grant must be reserved for students who are farmworkers as defined in section 2 of this act and who otherwise qualify for the grant.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 28B.117 RCW to read as follows:

Ten percent of funds available for the passport to careers program and the passport to apprenticeship opportunities program must be reserved for students who are farmworkers as defined in section 2 of this act and who otherwise qualify for the programs.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 28B.115 RCW to read as follows:

Ten percent of funds available for the Washington health corps must be reserved for students who are farmworkers as defined in section 2 of this act and who otherwise qualify under this chapter.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 28B.103 RCW to read as follows:

Ten percent of funds available for the Washington national guard postsecondary education grant program must be reserved for students who are farmworkers as defined in section 2 of this act and who otherwise qualify for the grant.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 28B.122 RCW to read as follows:

Ten percent of funds available for the aerospace training student loan program must be reserved for students who are farmworkers as defined in section 2 of this act and who otherwise qualify for the program.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  Sections 1 through 5 of this act constitute a new chapter in Title 28B RCW.

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