

SENATE BILL REPORT

HB 2246

As of February 23, 2024

Title: An act relating to vacation leave accrual for state employees.

Brief Description: Concerning vacation leave accrual for state employees.

Sponsors: Representatives Bateman, Low, Gregerson, Bronoske, Robertson, Reeves, Paul, Reed and Doglio.

Brief History: Passed House: 2/12/24, 97-0.

Committee Activity: Labor & Commerce: 2/20/24, 2/20/24 [DP-WM, DNP].
Ways & Means: 2/23/24.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Increases the maximum number of hours of unused vacation leave a state employee may accrue from 240 hours to 280 hours.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON LABOR & COMMERCE

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

Signed by Senators Keiser, Chair; Conway, Vice Chair; Saldaña, Vice Chair; King, Ranking Member; Braun, Hansen, MacEwen and Stanford.

Minority Report: Do not pass.

Signed by Senator Schoesler.

Staff: Jarrett Sacks (786-7448)

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Staff: Amanda Cecil (786-7460)

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Background: State employees are entitled to at least eight hours of vacation leave for each month of employment. The amount of vacation leave a state employee earns increases depending on the number of years the employee is continuously employed. Employees may accrue a maximum of 240 hours of unused vacation leave. Leave in excess of 240 hours may be accrued prior to an employee's anniversary date of employment, but the excess leave is extinguished if it is not used by the anniversary date.

If an employee's request for vacation leave is deferred by their employer, and a statement of necessity is retained by the employer, then the 240 hour maximum is extended for each month the leave is deferred. When an employee separates from state employment as a result of a reduction in force, resignation, dismissal, retirement, or death, the employee or their estate is entitled to be reimbursed for any accrued vacation leave.

Summary of Bill: The maximum number of hours of unused vacation leave a state employee may accrue is increased to 280 hours.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony (Labor & Commerce): PRO: The cap of 240 hours impacts our longest serving state employees the most. Particularly for employees working in 24/7 facilities and emergency services, it can be very difficult to use vacation leave. Certain elections employees lose their leave during election years because they cannot take leave until off years. Other states allow for more leave rollover. For example, Oregon allows 350 hours to rollover and Idaho is 336 hours. Employees cannot take leave due to staffing shortages, so they end up losing their benefits.

Persons Testifying (Labor & Commerce): PRO: Kati Durkin, Washington Federation of State Employees; Seamus Petrie, Washington Public Employees Association.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying (Labor & Commerce): No one.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony (Ways & Means): PRO: The current threshold is especially problematic for people that have been with the state the longest and those that work at the 24/7 institutions who have a harder time using their leave. Washington has some of the lowest accrual threshold and this is more in line with other states like Oregon, that allows employees to carry a balance of 350 hours.

Persons Testifying (Ways & Means): PRO: Kati Durkin.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying (Ways & Means): No one.