HOUSE BILL REPORT
SHB 1121

As Passed Legislature

Title: An act relating to the restrictions on the working conditions and hours of sixteen- and seventeen-year olds meeting certain criteria.

Brief Description: Concerning restrictions on the working conditions and hours of sixteen- and seventeen-year olds.

Sponsors: House Committee on Labor & Workplace Standards (originally sponsored by Representatives McClintock, Schmidt, Jacobsen and Orcutt).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Labor & Workplace Standards: 2/4/25, 2/14/25 [DPS].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 3/10/25, 95-0.
Passed Senate: 4/9/25, 44-5.
Passed Legislature.

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Requires the Department of Labor and Industries to allow a 16- or 17-year old to work the same number of hours and days during the school year as would be permitted during school vacations or holidays ("nonschool week hours") if the minor is enrolled in a career and technical education program and the work is performed for an employer approved by the program.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON LABOR & WORKPLACE STANDARDS

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 9 members: Representatives Berry, Chair; Fosse, Vice Chair; Scott, Vice Chair; Schmidt, Ranking Minority Member; Ybarra, Assistant Ranking Minority Member;

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Bronoske, McEntire, Obras and Ortiz-Self.

Staff: Kelly Leonard (786-7147).

Background:

Both federal and state laws impose restrictions on the employment of minors (persons under 18 years of age). The Washington Industrial Welfare Act directs the Department of Labor and Industries (L&I) to establish requirements and restrictions on the wages, working hours, and other conditions for the employment of minors in nonagricultural trades and occupations. In order to employ a minor, an employer must: (1) obtain a minor work permit; (2) obtain parental and school authorization, if applicable; (3) verify the minor's age and comply with any restrictions imposed based on age; and (4) limit the hours worked by the minor, if applicable.

The restrictions on the working hours for minors participating in nonagricultural work varies based on the age group and whether school is in session. The work week for minors is Sunday through Saturday, and the school week is Monday through Friday. Any week with any amount of school time is considered a school week. Minors cannot work during school hours. "School hours" are defined as the hours that the minor's applicable neighborhood public school is in session, which apply even in instances where the minor is not enrolled in school.

There are some exceptions to the hours restrictions. A 16- or 17-year old may work the same hours during a school week as would be permitted during a nonschool week if the minor: (1) is married; (2) is a parent; or (3) has a high school diploma or equivalent. In addition, L&I rules permit a minor enrolled in a bona fide college program, like the Running Start program, to work nonschool week hours during school weeks. In other instances without an explicit exception, an employer may seek a variance from L&I to allow a minor to work additional hours during school weeks.

For 16- and 17-year olds, L&I rules limit working hours for nonagricultural work as follows:

Schedule	**Maximum Hours Per Day**	**Maximum Hours Per Week**	**Maximum Days Per Week**	**Start to End Times**
School Week	4 hours (except for 8 hours on weekends)	20 hours	6 days	7 a.m. - 10 p.m. (midnight on Fridays and Saturdays)
Nonschool Week (Vacations)	8 hours	48 hours	6 days	5 a.m. - midnight
School Week	6 hours	28 hours	6 days	7 a.m. - 10 p.m.

with special variance				(midnight on Fridays and Saturdays)

Summary of Substitute Bill:

L&I rules must allow a 16- or 17-year old minor to work the same number of hours and days during the school year as would be permitted during school vacations or holidays (nonschool week hours) if the minor is enrolled in a career and technical education program and the work is performed for an employer approved by the program. A "career and technical education program" refers to a work-based learning program approved by the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction or the minor's school district, including, for example, Core Plus programs.

The same allowance of hours must be made for a 16- or 17-year old enrolled in a bona fide college program, except the minor is not required to work for an approved employer, effectively codifying the L&I rule with respect to these minors.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect on July 1, 2026.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) There is an evident need for workforce development in the trades. Career and technical education (CTE) programs create critical pathways for kids interested in these professions. Kids can get lost in high school without a focus, and CTE programs help to provide that focus. But current agency rules are a barrier for them to participate in and work in those programs. The state should be encouraging these careers and also the development of independence and skills. The bill creates establishes parity between Running Start students and CTE students. Running Start students already have an exemption from agency rules, allowing them to work more flexible and extended hours during the school year. This gives CTE students the same opportunity if the work is for the employer connected with the program. It's not just for any type of work. The bill does not have anything to do with prohibited duties; instead, it's just hours and the timing of those hours.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Stephanie McClintock, prime sponsor; Lindsey Hueer, Association of Washington Business; Brandon Houskeeper, SW WA Contractors Assoc.; Mike Ennis, Building Industry Association of Washington; Katelyn Kean, Northwest Maritime; Carolyn Logue, AJAC; Tim Knue, Washington Association for Career and Technical Education; and Michele Williams, Associated General Contractors (AGC).

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.