

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1722

As Passed House:

March 8, 2025

Title: An act relating to state restrictions affecting 16 and 17 year old students participating in secondary career and technical education programs and other state-approved career pathways.

Brief Description: Reviewing state restrictions affecting students participating in secondary career and technical education programs and other state-approved career pathways.

Sponsors: Representatives Connors, Schmidt, Dufault and Barnard.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Labor & Workplace Standards: 2/12/25, 2/19/25 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 3/8/25, 96-0.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires the Department of Health to create a process to allow 16-year-olds to begin emergency medical technician training under certain circumstances.
- Requires the state Fire Marshal's Office to assess age restrictions on its training programs with the goal of increasing professional and volunteer opportunities in the fire service.
- Prohibits the Department of Labor and Industries from prohibiting minors with certain licensure or certifications from working in occupations with high risk of exposure to bloodborne and other infectious diseases.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON LABOR & WORKPLACE STANDARDS

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.

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 9 members: Representatives Berry, Chair; Fosse, Vice Chair; Scott, Vice Chair; Schmidt, Ranking Minority Member; Ybarra, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Bronoske, McEntire, Obras and Ortiz-Self.

Staff: Benjamin McCarthy (786-7116).

Background:

Emergency Medical Technician Training.

The Secretary of the Department of Health (DOH) sets minimum standards for emergency medical technician (EMT) training. An EMT is an individual who is authorized by the Secretary of the DOH, to render emergency medical care. The DOH requires that individuals be at least 17 years old to enroll in EMT training. An individual must be 18 years old to be certified as an EMT.

Fire Protection Service Training Programs.

The state Fire Marshal oversees the regional fire protection service authority, a branch of the Washington State Patrol. The Fire Marshal's responsibilities include providing fire protection-related academic, vocational, and field training programs at community colleges, technical colleges, state colleges and universities, skill centers, and other educational programs. An individual must be 18 years old to train as a firefighter.

Minors Working in Occupations with the Risk of Exposure to Bloodborne Illness or Infectious Disease.

The Department of Labor and Industries prohibits minors from working in occupations where there is a risk of exposure to bodily fluids or transmission of infectious agents. There are two exceptions to this prohibition: first, if the minor is a student in a bona fide health care career training or vocational education program, or if the minor is a state-certified lifeguard with first aid training.

Summary of Bill:

Emergency Medical Technician Training.

The Department of Health (DOH) must develop a process to allow students who are at least 16 years old to begin certain emergency medical service training courses. The courses must be administered by a state-approved skill center or other vocational education program approved by the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction. The program must also require continuous training until the student turns 18 years old or graduates from high school, whichever is earlier.

Fire Protection Service Training Programs.

The Fire Marshal must assess the regional fire protection service authority's policies relating to certain fire service training programs. The assessment's goal is to increase professional and volunteer opportunities in the fire service and must include an assessment of age

restrictions for fire service training, examinations, and certification.

The Fire Marshal must report to the Legislature by October 1, 2025, any changes made to the regional fire protection service authority's policies and practices, as well as any recommendations on changes to state laws and rules for the purpose of improving professional and volunteer opportunities in the fire service.

Minors Working in Occupations with the Risk of Exposure to Bloodborne Illness or Infectious Disease.

If a minor has a valid professional license or certification from the DOH that requires competency in procedures for preventing the transmission of bloodborne pathogens and infectious diseases, the Department of Labor and Industries may not prohibit the minor from participating in an occupation solely because of the risk of exposure to bodily fluids or transmission of infectious agents.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) This is about increasing career and technical opportunities for minors who have certificates. Students who are in an EMS program, but are 16 years old, cannot begin parts of their training; this would allow them to start those parts of their training earlier so long as the program is continuous. Other students complete their training, but have to wait until they turn 18 before they can test. While waiting, these students might have to find other work and lose the skills they've learned in training. Nursing homes must get two variances before minors with a nursing assistant license can work for them; this would reduce that down to one variance. This bill reduces barriers and increases the number of young people who can get into important parts of the workforce. These programs prioritize safety and risk management.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative April Connors, prime sponsor; Paul Randall, Angela Nemeth, Nathen Allington, and Ethan Wodehouse, Tri-Tech Skills Center; John Axtell; Lynette Brower, Washington State Skills Center Association; and Katelyn Kean, Northwest Maritime.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.