

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SSB 5152

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As Passed Senate, March 7, 1997

**Title:** An act relating to allowing the department of social and health services access to employment security department data on clients in the job opportunities and basic skills training program and any subsequent state welfare program.

**Brief Description:** Allowing the department of social and health services access to employment security department data on clients in the job opportunities and basic skills training program and any subsequent state welfare program.

**Sponsors:** Senate Committee on Health & Long-Term Care (originally sponsored by Senators Prince, Bauer, Wojahn, Horn, Oke, Winsley and Patterson; by request of Joint Legislative Audit & Review Committee).

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Health & Long-Term Care: 1/31/97, 2/18/97 [DPS].  
Passed Senate, 3/7/97, 48-0.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & LONG-TERM CARE

**Majority Report:** That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5152 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Deccio, Chair; Wood, Vice Chair; Benton, Fairley, Franklin, Strannigan and Wojahn.

**Staff:** Susan Lucas (786-7711)

**Background:** The Employment Security Department maintains records including wage and salary data, employment histories and other information regarding individual businesses and employees. To the extent the information identifies or is about specific businesses or employees, it may be subject to privacy and confidentiality protection.

The Economic Services Administration in the Department of Social and Health Services administers the JOBS program, which is responsible for placing welfare recipients into employment. Administrators of the JOBS program find that detailed information is needed on a regular basis to determine how many JOBS participants obtain employment, at what wages and how long participants stay in employment.

Although current state law provides for a release of information by the Employment Security Department to other agencies, there is concern that the statutory requirement that notice be formally served on all individuals and employing units involved in the disclosure would effectively prohibit the transfer of detailed employment information on a regular basis and in a timely manner.

**Summary of Bill:** The Employment Security Department must provide confidential employer wage information to the Department of Social and Health Services on a quarterly basis for all participants in a state welfare to work program.

The Department of Social and Health Services may only use the information for statistical analysis and program evaluation purposes.

The Department of Social and Health Services must protect the privacy of confidential personal data supplied under the act.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

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

**Testimony For:** Access to confidential employer information is required to determine if taxpayer funds are being spent properly. Both DSHS and Employment Security support the bill. Confidentiality of this data must be protected by both agencies.

**Testimony Against:** None.

**Testified:** PRO: Senator Eugene Prince, prime sponsor; Mark McDermott, DSHS; Gary Bedeutch, Employment Security Department.