
ENGROSSED SENATE BILL 6141

State of Washington 62nd Legislature 2012 Regular Session

By Senators Kilmer, Tom, Shin, Kastama, Ericksen, Chase, and Frockt

Read first time 01/12/12. Referred to Committee on Economic Development, Trade & Innovation.

1 AN ACT Relating to a lifelong learning program; adding a new
2 section to chapter 28C.18 RCW; and creating a new section.

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

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that training and
5 education is vitally important in the development of skilled workers
6 and the promotion of an internationally competitive economy. It is the
7 intent of the legislature to promote the opportunity to succeed. It is
8 the further intent of the legislature to build a highly skilled and
9 globally competitive workforce by supporting the movement of low-
10 skilled workers into average-skilled jobs and moving average-skilled
11 workers into high-skilled jobs to achieve a world class competitive
12 workforce that is sustainable through the coming decades. The
13 legislature intends, through the establishment of a lifelong learning
14 program, to address the challenge of providing low-skilled workers with
15 postsecondary education and training and ultimately achieving
16 excellence in all sectors of our workforce and economy. The
17 legislature intends that participation in the lifelong learning program
18 is completely voluntary and in no way obligatory for employers or

1 employees. The legislature intends the lifelong learning program to
2 develop partnerships and mechanisms through which:

3 (1) Workers take responsibility for advancing in their careers and
4 improving their economic future by investing their own funds in their
5 training and education;

6 (2) Employers voluntarily promote the success of their businesses,
7 workers, and communities by investing in their workers' lifelong
8 learning accounts;

9 (3) Educational and training institutions promote the establishment
10 of lifelong learning accounts to equip students and their employers
11 with a means to meet the financial demands of higher education tuition
12 costs and the competitive needs of industries;

13 (4) State and local government institutions provide the
14 infrastructure, incentives, and proactive support for employees,
15 employers, and institutions to invest in lifelong learning accounts;
16 and

17 (5) Financial institutions and nonprofit organizations invest their
18 resources to provide the initial web of support to establish pilot
19 projects, foster program development, assist in impact evaluation, and
20 assist in migrating the program achievements and best practices across
21 other communities and industries in the United States.

22 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 28C.18 RCW
23 to read as follows:

24 (1) A lifelong learning program is established within the workforce
25 training and education coordinating board to provide the opportunity
26 for employees, with the support of their employers, to create
27 educational savings accounts that may be used to fund approved
28 education and training. In operating the program, the board:

29 (a) May partner with, and coordinate the voluntary alignment of
30 services with, financial institutions and other public, private, and
31 nonprofit organizations in order to enable low-wage workers to attain
32 high-skilled and high-wage jobs in their communities;

33 (b) Must work with its partners to:

34 (i) Establish the policies, rules, and procedures, including but
35 not limited to standards for fund management and for approving career
36 development plans and education and training, that support the
37 operation of the program;

1 (ii) Ensure the program is marketed to various geographic areas and
2 industry sectors of the state, as well as to low-wage workers, their
3 employers, and the communities in which they reside; and

4 (iii) Help partners coordinate new career counseling services with
5 existing online and other providers, including the state's WorkSource
6 system;

7 (c) May work with financial institutions to encourage their full
8 engagement in:

9 (i) The management functions of the program, including managing
10 lifelong learning accounts for individual employers and their
11 respective employees consistent with program requirements and
12 guidelines;

13 (ii) Adding value to the program through the provision of financial
14 literacy and career counseling; and

15 (iii) Aligning their activities under a consolidated partnership,
16 which may include the designation of one fund manager to streamline the
17 establishment and management of the program; and

18 (d) May develop program policies and system options that will lead
19 the program to become self-sustaining.

20 (2) The definitions in this subsection apply throughout this
21 section.

22 (a) "Approved career development plan" means an employee's career
23 development plan that is approved by the program managers and contains
24 the necessary information to determine if expenditures are in alignment
25 with program criteria.

26 (b) "Approved education and training" means education, training,
27 and associated costs aligned with an approved career development plan
28 and thus eligible to be funded from a lifelong learning account.

29 (c) "Financial institution" means any federally chartered or state
30 chartered bank, savings bank, or savings and loan association, or
31 credit union.

32 (d) "Lifelong learning accounts" means joint savings accounts that
33 are established by employees and employers to support the education and
34 training of employees and that are aligned with their approved career
35 development plan.

--- END ---