

SENATE BILL REPORT

2SHB 1525

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Early Learning & K-12 Education, March 15, 2023
Ways & Means, April 4, 2023

Title: An act relating to eligibility for working connections child care benefits for persons participating in state registered apprenticeships.

Brief Description: Concerning eligibility for working connections child care benefits for persons participating in state registered apprenticeships.

Sponsors: House Committee on Appropriations (originally sponsored by Representatives Fosse, Lekanoff, Farivar, Shavers, Thai, Taylor, Hansen, Alvarado, Senn, Hackney, Wylie, Duerr, Leavitt, Berg, Stearns, Peterson, Macri, Berry, Cortes, Low, Schmidt, Stonier, Kloba, Robertson, Gregerson, Riccelli, Doglio, Waters, Cheney, Orwall, Connors, Ybarra, Bronoske, Dent, Morgan, Ramel, Donaghy, Goodman, Ryu, Fey, Reed, Davis, Timmons, Street, Simmons, Fitzgibbon, Christian, Santos, Rule, Abbarno, Sandlin, Chopp, Bateman, Rude, Eslick, Ormsby, Reeves, Barkis, Graham, Pollet, Ortiz-Self, Callan and Bergquist).

Brief History: Passed House: 3/1/23, 96-0.

Committee Activity: Early Learning & K-12 Education: 3/13/23, 3/15/23 [DPA-WM, DNP, w/oRec].

Ways & Means: 3/21/23, 4/04/23 [DPA, DNP, w/oRec].

Brief Summary of Amended Bill

- Expands Working Connections Child Care eligibility to include the first 12 months of an applicant or consumer's enrollment in a state registered apprenticeship program when their household incomes do not exceed certain amounts.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

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

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.

Signed by Senators Wellman, Chair; Nobles, Vice Chair; Wilson, C., Vice Chair; Hunt and Pedersen.

Minority Report: Do not pass.

Signed by Senators Hawkins, Ranking Member; Dozier.

Minority Report: That it be referred without recommendation.

Signed by Senator McCune.

Staff: Ailey Kato (786-7434)

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Majority Report: Do pass as amended.

Signed by Senators Rolfes, Chair; Robinson, Vice Chair, Operating & Revenue; Mullet, Vice Chair, Capital; Billig, Conway, Dhingra, Hasegawa, Hunt, Keiser, Nguyen, Pedersen, Saldaña, Van De Wege and Wellman.

Minority Report: Do not pass.

Signed by Senator Schoesler, Ranking Member, Capital.

Minority Report: That it be referred without recommendation.

Signed by Senators Wilson, L., Ranking Member, Operating; Gildon, Assistant Ranking Member, Operating; Rivers, Assistant Ranking Member, Capital; Warnick, Assistant Ranking Member, Capital; Boehnke, Braun, Muzzall, Torres and Wagoner.

Staff: Joshua Hinman (786-7281)

Background: Working Connections Child Care. The Working Connections Child Care (WCCC) program is a federally and state-funded program that provides child care subsidies to families, and is administered by the Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF). Families are eligible for child care subsidies if they have a household income at or below 60 percent of the state median income (SMI), have one or more children younger than 13 or younger than 19 with a verified special need or are under court supervision, and meet all other program eligibility requirements. As of October 1, 2022, 60 percent of the state median income is \$4,274 maximum monthly income for a family of three.

In 2021, WCCC eligibility was expanded by phasing in higher income thresholds. Beginning July 1, 2025, families are eligible for child care subsidies if they have a household income at or below 75 percent of SMI and meet other requirements. Beginning July 1, 2027 and subject to appropriations, families are eligible if they have a household income at or below 85 percent of SMI and meet other requirements.

The state pays part of the cost of child care when the parent is working or participating in certain activities. Depending on income, families may be required to make a copayment to

the child care provider. Copayments are established in state law and are phased in.

Authorizations for WCCC subsidies are effective for 12 months.

Registered Apprenticeships. An apprenticeship combines on-the-job training with related classroom instruction under the supervision of a journey-level professional. After completing a registered apprenticeship program, apprentices receive a professional credential that is recognized nationwide.

Summary of Amended Bill: An applicant or consumer is eligible to receive WCCC benefits for the care of one or more eligible children for the first 12 months of enrollment in a state registered apprenticeship program when the applicant or consumer has a household income that does not exceed 75 percent of SMI at the time of application and meets other eligibility requirements. Beginning July 1, 2027, the income threshold increases to 85 percent of SMI if funds are appropriated.

A state registered apprenticeship applicant is no longer required to be a full-time student of a community, technical, or tribal college in order to waive work requirements as a condition of receiving WCCC benefits.

DCYF must adopt a copayment model that aligns with any copayment identified or adopted for households with the same income level.

EFFECT OF WAYS & MEANS COMMITTEE AMENDMENT(S):

- Continues to waive work requirements as a condition for receiving WCCC benefits for applicants or consumers participating in a state registered apprenticeship program but no longer requires these applicants or consumers to be full-time students of a community, technical, or tribal college.
- Modifies the state median income threshold beginning July 1, 2027, to mirror the threshold in current state law.
- Requires children to be a certain age and that the household meets all other program eligibility requirements, which mirrors the requirements in current state law.

EFFECT OF EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION COMMITTEE AMENDMENT(S):

- Removes the date of July 1, 2023 for when the first phase of the policy begins, so that the policy takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session.

Appropriation: The bill contains a null and void clause requiring specific funding be provided in an omnibus appropriation act.

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 on Second Substitute House Bill (Early Learning & K-12 Education): *The committee recommended a different version of the bill than what was heard.* PRO: One of the barriers for diversifying the trades is the cost of child care. Child care deficits disproportionately impact women and single parents. This bill will help with recruiting and retaining trader workers who are needed to help meet housing and clean energy goals. Providing child care subsidies for people participating in apprenticeships will help provide stability and help the completion of apprenticeships, which is especially important for people who are transitioning away from public assistance.

Persons Testifying (Early Learning & K-12 Education): PRO: Representative Mary Fosse, Prime Sponsor; Erin Frasier, Washington State Building & Construction Trades Council; Heather Kurtenbach, Ironworkers Local 86; Nicole Grant, IBEW 46; Maya Gillett.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying (Early Learning & K-12 Education): No one.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony on Bill as Amended by Early Learning & K-12 Education (Ways & Means): *The committee recommended a different version of the bill than what was heard.* PRO: Testifier represents the largest union of child care providers. Child care is the biggest barrier to apprenticeships. They are only paid for time at the job site and child care prices become a real barrier, particularly for women and color. Lack of child care access prevents people from transitioning into good paying jobs.

This bill is a smart investment. This bill also builds on privately funded initiatives. If the state wants to build industries like clean energy, transportation, and more, where people need skills for trade, we need apprenticeships to finish. Without allowing for participants to finish their apprenticeships, state investments will be cut off.

Persons Testifying (Ways & Means): PRO: Erin Haick, SEIU 925.

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