

# LEGISLATION AFFECTING EMPLOYMENT & TRAINING FOR LOW-INCOME RESIDENTS:

Brief on the 2008 Washington State Legislative Session

May 2008



## **I. ACCESS TO POSTSECONDARY TRAINING**

Legislation related to increasing access to and affordability of community college for all low-income residents of Washington State.

### **SHB 2582 – Child Care at Higher Education Institutions**

**Prime Sponsor:** Representative Roberts

**Status:** Bill vetoed. **Funding:** \$500,000 (additional) for 2008-2009

**Summary of Bill:** Provides matching grant funds to be awarded by the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges to campus child care centers for the provision of quality child care services for children of students.

The Governor vetoed this bill, stating that the significant increase in funding for these programs should be evaluated as part of the biennial budget process when it can be reviewed in context with existing child care programs.

### **ESSB 6371 – Veterans’ Families Tuition Waivers**

**Prime Sponsor:** Senator Hewitt

**Status:** Bill passed. **Funding:** NA

**Summary of Bill:** Allows community and technical colleges (as well as four-year institutions) to waive all or a portion of tuition and fees for eligible veterans and national guard members, or for children, spouses or surviving spouses of disabled or deceased eligible veterans or national guard members. Recipients of waivers may attend full or part-time for a maximum of 200 quarter credits, or the equivalent of semester credits.

### **ESHB 2687 – 2008 Supplemental Operating Budget**

**Section 605(17) – Opportunity Grants.** While reductions were proposed to Opportunity Grant funding levels that had been set in the 2007 legislative session in this provision, funding levels were eventually preserved at the full amount.

## **II. ADULT EDUCATION AND CAREER PATHWAYS**

Legislation related to ensuring that the training provided by community colleges meets the needs of low-income adults and effectively advances them along career pathways. Additionally, legislation that relates to workforce educational opportunities and the general development of career pathways.

### **2SSB 6377– Career and Technical Education Programs**

**Prime Sponsor:** Senator Hobbs

**Status:** Partial bill veto. **Funding:** \$2,750,000

**Summary of Bill:** Requires the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) to develop a list of statewide high-demand programs for secondary career and technical education (CTE). It also requires that all approved preparatory CTE education programs to either lead to industry certification or allow students to earn dual high school and college credit (directing community colleges to create articulation agreements with high schools and skill centers to create dual credit CTE programs). In addition, it creates the secondary integrated basic education and skills training (I-BEST) pilot project to integrate career and technical instruction, core academic and basic skills, and English as a second language, for secondary school students. Directs the Workforce Board to create an in-demand scholarship program to attract students into high-demand fields.

The Governor vetoed portions of the bill left unfunded, which include the in-demand scholarship program and I-BEST as specifically described in 2SSB 6377. However, I-BEST is still funded at \$250,000 in the supplemental operating budget [see ESHB 2687 Sec. 511 (47)] specifically for programs at five skill centers.

### **SHB 3129 – Online Learning Information**

**Prime Sponsor:** Representative Schmick

**Status:** Bill passed. **Funding:** Sufficient funding provided within the OSPI General-Fund State appropriation to OSPI

**Summary of Bill:** Directs the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) to compile information about online learning programs for high school students to earn college credit and to place the information prominently on its web site. Requires high schools to ensure that teachers and counselors have information about online learning programs for high school students to earn college credit and are able to assist parents and students in accessing the information.

**SB 6261 – Adult Youth Research**

**Prime Sponsor:** Senator Kilmer

**Status:** Bill passed. **Funding:** No new funding

**Summary of Bill:** Directs the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board to research and advise the Governor and Legislature on policies and programs to alleviate the high unemployment rate among young adults (18-24), including evaluating work and learning programs serving this population.

**E2SSB 6673 – Extended Learning Opportunities**

**Prime Sponsor:** Senator McAuliffe

**Status:** Partial bill veto. **Funding:** \$15,065,000

**Summary of Bill:** Creates the extended learning opportunities program and instructional support for students in grades 8, 11 and 12 who are not on track to meet local or state graduation requirements. Provides grants to middle schools, high schools and skill centers, to develop or upgrade high-demand career and technical education (CTE) programs. Programs can serve students during regular school day as well as evenings or weekends.

The Governor vetoed a provision in the bill that would provide \$500,000 solely for summer programs for middle and high school students to explore careers rich in math science and technology using CTE programs as the delivery model.

**2SHB 2783 – Transfers and Academic Planning**

**Prime Sponsor:** Representative Wallace

**Status:** Bill vetoed. **Funding:** \$30,000

**Summary of Bill:** Requires the Higher Education Coordinating Board to convene a work group including representatives from the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board, the Council of Presidents, and two-year and four-year institutions of higher education to develop a plan to track the success of transfer students and to develop and implement a statewide web-based academic planning tool. The primary goals are to better coordinate transfer and articulation policies and communicate these policies to students in a common format.

The Governor vetoed this bill, stating that it is duplicative of pre-existing efforts by the Higher Education Coordinating Board and the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges.

## **ESHB 2687 – 2008 Supplemental Operating Budget**

**Section 605(23) – Adult Literacy Education.** Earmarked \$115,000 from the General Fund-State for the State Board for Community & Technical Colleges to do two things. First, hold a one-day summit to inform the public, adult literacy instructional personnel, and government and community leaders about the status of adult literacy and adult literacy education in Washington. Second, to undertake a media campaign to increase public awareness about the availability of adult, family, and workforce literacy services and resources.

The Governor vetoed this expenditure, stating that the State Board should consider undertaking this work within existing appropriations.

**Section 605(21) - Health Care Workers.** Appropriated \$1.5 M from the General Fund-State for competitive grants to labor, management, and college partnerships to develop or expand and evaluate innovative training programs for incumbent hospital workers that lead to careers in nursing and other high-demand health care fields.

**Section 605(22) - Gateway Center Career Coach.** Appropriated \$75,000 from General Fund-State for the Gateway Center pilot project at Highline Community College for coaching and managing student participants in the pilot program. The Gateway Center provides coursework and coaching to close skill gaps for adult immigrants and refugees who have training in the healthcare industry.

**Section 605(27) - Workplace-Based Instruction.** Appropriated \$50,000 from General Fund-State to Renton Technical College to implement workplace-based instructional programs for immigrants.

### **III. WORK SUPPORTS, WORKFIRST, RELATED**

Legislation related to improving the effectiveness of WorkFirst for TANF recipients and/or work supports to help low-income residents reach economic self-sufficiency.

#### **ESSB 6809 – Working Families Tax Exemption**

**Prime Sponsor:** Pridemore

**Status:** Bill passed. **Funding:** NA

**Summary of Bill:** Provides a sales tax exemption, in the form of a remittance, to lower-income working families in the state, using the federal earned income tax credit as a proxy for the amount of sales tax paid. Qualifying are those who have properly filed federal income tax returns in Washington and who are eligible for, and are granted, the federal earned income tax credit. The amount of the tax exemption for 2009 and 2010 is the greater of 5% of the federal earned income tax credit granted or \$25; for 2011 and thereafter it is the greater of 10% of the federal earned income tax credit granted or \$50.

#### **SSB 6751 – Unemployment Benefits for Apprentices**

**Prime Sponsor:** Senator Kohl-Welles

**Status:** Bill passed. **Funding:** NA

**Summary of Bill:** Allows individuals who leave work to enter certain approved apprenticeship programs to receive unemployment insurance benefits.

#### **ESHB 2687 – 2008 Supplemental Operating Budget**

**Section 206(9)** - Provides the Department of Social and Health Services with \$6.14 M to increase compensation for low-wage workers in nursing homes

**Section 207(1)(e)** - For FY 09, allows the Department of Social and Health Services to increase the temporary assistance for needy families (TANF) grant by 3% to account for increased housing costs.

**Section 207(13)** - Provides \$1.1 M in state funds and \$850,000 in federal funds to increase gross income limits for eligibility for programs authorized under RCW 74.04.500 (food stamps program) and 74.08A.120 (food assistance for immigrants not qualifying for food stamps program) to 200% of the Federal Poverty Level.

#### **IV. OTHER WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT**

Other legislation related to workforce development that may benefit low-income individuals in Washington State

##### **2SHB 2815 – Green Jobs Training**

**Prime Sponsor:** Representative Dunshee

**Status:** Bill passed. **Funding:** \$222,000 (ESD) and \$207,000 (CTED)

**Summary of Bill:** Contains provisions authorizing labor market analysis, creating skill panels, and creating a green collar job training program to train workers for clean energy jobs. Directs the Workforce Board to create and pilot green industry skill panels.

##### **SSB 5254 – Industry Skill Panels**

**Prime Sponsor:** Senator Kilmer

**Status:** Bill passed. **Funding:** No new funds (to be paid for through Workforce Training & Education Coordinating Board’s current budget)

**Summary of Bill:** Directs the Workforce Board to establish industry skill panel standards that identify the expectations for industry skill panel products and services. Continued funding of particular industry skill panels is to be based on meeting the standards established by the board.

##### **SB 6295 – Worksite Digital Learning**

**Prime Sponsor:** Senator Kilmer

**Status:** Bill passed. **Funding:** No new funds (to be paid for through Workforce Training & Education Coordinating Board’s current budget)

**Summary of Bill:** Requires the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board to convene a work group to study workplace-based distance (digital) learning programs. The work group will (a) identify and evaluate current workplace-based educational programs; (b) review and establish standards and best practices; (c) recommend methods to increase student access and completion; (d) determine methods to increase the institutional supply and quality of open course materials and digital open textbooks; and (f) review and report demographic information on enrollments, retention, and completions. The group will select up to eight institutions of higher education (including four community colleges) to develop and offer pilot projects.