

SFA

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Fiscal Agency

Lansing, Michigan 48909

(517) 373-5383

House Bill 4857 (Substitute S-1 as reported)
Sponsor: Representative Mary C. Brown
House Committee: Colleges and Universities
Senate Committee: Education and Mental Health

Date Completed: 3-7-90

RECEIVED

APR 18 1990

Mich. State Law Library

RATIONALE

Public Act 288 of 1986 created the Michigan work-study (MWS) program, which was patterned after a Federal work-study program and is administered by the Michigan Higher Education Assistance Authority (MHEAA). The Authority provides funds to degree-granting postsecondary schools for use in creating work-study opportunities for students. Under a work-study program, an undergraduate student is able to supplement other financial aid he or she may be receiving by allowing the student to work during the school year. Public Act 288, however, does not permit a student participating in the program to continue working during various school breaks, such as over the summer or during the holiday season. This restriction apparently is inconsistent with the Federal college work-study (CWS) program, which allows students who intend to return to school after a break to continue working the CWS job during the break. Some people believe the State program should be consistent with the Federal program in order to prevent confusion among students who are applying for either or both work-study programs. In addition, students should have every opportunity, some contend, to earn money to pay for their college expenses.

CONTENT

The bill would amend Public Act 288 of 1986 to permit students to participate in the Michigan work-study program during periods in which they were not enrolled in school, but were between terms. The bill also would modify eligibility criteria for nonprofit and for-profit employers

that employ students through the MWS program.

Under the Act, a student must be enrolled in at least a half-time undergraduate program of study at an eligible postsecondary school, and meet other requirements, in order to participate in the MWS program. The bill provides that a student could participate in the program during a period when he or she was not enrolled if all of the following conditions were met:

- The student was otherwise eligible to participate.
- The student had been enrolled in at least a half-time undergraduate program at an eligible school for the preceding quarter, term, or semester.
- The financial aid officer at the school determined that the period during which the student was not enrolled would not exceed four months and the student had enrolled or signed an intent to enroll in at least a half-time program at the school for the following quarter, term, or semester.

The Act provides that an employer organized for nonprofit purposes cannot employ students to construct, operate, or maintain a facility used for sectarian instruction or as a place for religious worship, or "other activity espousing a particular political or moral position". The bill specifies, instead, that an employer could not employ students to construct, operate, or maintain a facility used for sectarian instruction or as a place for religious workshop, or "activity espousing or promoting a partisan

H.B. 4857 (3-7-90)

political position or candidate".

The Act also establishes requirements that a for-profit employer must meet in order to be eligible to employ students through the MWS program. Among the requirements is that an employer enter into a signed agreement with an eligible postsecondary school to provide employment "which is directly related to the students' academic fields" for students recommended by the school. The bill specifies, instead, that the employer would have to provide employment "that is determined by the school to be academically relevant".

MCL 390.1374, 390.1375, & 390.1376

SENATE COMMITTEE ACTION

The Senate Education and Mental Health Committee adopted a substitute bill (S-1) that would modify eligibility criteria applicable to for-profit employers who employ students through the MWS program.

FISCAL IMPACT

The bill would have no fiscal impact on State or local government.

ARGUMENTS

Supporting Argument

The bill would allow a continuity of employment for students during the entire academic year, including holidays and summer term. With the increased employment options that could result from the bill, students would have greater opportunities to meet their educational expenses. Furthermore, as a result of the bill, the Michigan work-study program would more closely parallel the Federal work-study program, which permits employment during periods when students aren't enrolled in school. Bringing Michigan's program more closely in line with the Federal program also would ease the administrative burden of college personnel who must administer both programs.

Response: Although the bill would bring Michigan's program more in line with the Federal program, there could be a conflict with Public Act 303 of 1986, which established Michigan's work-study graduate program. The same changes that are proposed for Public Act 288 also should be made for Public Act 303 in order to avoid a conflict in the administration

of these two State work-study programs.

Supporting Argument

Under the bill, a nonprofit employer could not employ students to construct, operate, or maintain a facility used for activity espousing or promoting a partisan political position or candidate. This provision would provide assurances that funds from Michigan's work-study program were not used to promote a partisan political candidate or position.

Response: Students interested in a career in politics or public service would be denied the opportunity to gain experience in these areas because they would not be allowed to work on campaigns for State or local elections or ballot issues.

Supporting Argument

Currently, a for-profit employer may participate in the program, if the employer signs an agreement to provide employment that is "directly related to the students' academic fields". Under the bill, the employment would have to be determined by the school to be "academically relevant". The result of this change would be expanded employment opportunities in the private sector for work-study students. Furthermore, there are certain lessons to be learned just by being employed--such as accepting responsibilities, teamwork, and promptness--regardless of whether the job itself is "directly related" to a student's field of study.

Opposing Argument

Under the bill a student could participate in the program while not enrolled in school for a period of time, if the student met certain conditions, including having enrolled or signed an intent to enroll in at least a half-time program at the school for the following quarter, term, or semester. Despite this, some students might not return to classes as anticipated after they worked under the program during a term or semester when they were not enrolled in classes.

Legislative Analyst: L. Arasim
Fiscal Analyst: A. Rich

H8990/S4857A

This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan Senate staff for use by the Senate in its deliberations and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.