

ASSEMBLY THIRD READING

AB 628 (Eduardo Garcia)

As Amended May 3, 2021

Majority vote

SUMMARY

Requires the Executive Director of the California Workforce Development Board (CWDB) to convene an advisory group for the Breaking Barriers to Employment Initiative (BBEI) that includes community organizations with a proven history of leadership and partnership serving targeted populations. This bill would also revise the BBEI's grant application requirements, evaluation, and selection.

Major Provisions

- 1) Requires the advisory group to establish grant application criteria and parameters for eligible organizations, review and make recommendations to the CWDB regarding grant proposals, support identification of prospective grantees, support technical assistance opportunities, and make recommendations to the CWDB to strengthen implementation.
- 2) Provides that the BBEI should strive to address racial and ethnic exclusion and inequity in the labor force and enhance racial and economic justice.
- 3) Requires that not more than 5% of any annual appropriation to the BBEI Fund shall be available to, or used by, the board for state operations.

COMMENTS

A recent report by the California Future of Work Commission found that vulnerable populations face wage gaps and employment gaps, exclusion from the workforce, and disproportionate employment in low-quality jobs. These workers face a growing divide in economic advancement and persistent disparities in unemployment across race, gender, age, education level, sexual orientation, disability status, military service history, housing status, citizenship status, and experience with the criminal justice system. Working people of color are over three times more likely than white workers to live in poverty.

According to the AB 1520 (Burke), Chapter 415, Statutes of 2017, Lifting Children and Families out of Poverty Task Force Report, "employment provides the most sustainable route out of poverty. Providing individuals with quality employment opportunities requires: job skills training, transition and barrier removal services, subsidized employment/apprenticeships, and child care for adults in workless households currently experiencing deep poverty.

Apprenticeships, skills gateways and supportive services for childless young people not in employment, education or training are also vital. Quality jobs provide a living wage, stable and predictable pay, control over scheduling, access to benefits, a safe and dignified work environment, and opportunities for training and career advancement."

According to the Author

"California needs a targeted program to help unskilled and under-skilled workers improve their skills and be prepared to meet business and industries need. While the original Breaking Barriers legislation was critical in providing the first investment into the workforce system, more could be done to ensure the equity and access of the program is improved."

Arguments in Support

The Little Hoover Commission (LHC) argues in support, In our recent report, 'Beyond the Crisis: A Long-Term Approach to Reduce, Prevent, and Recover from Intimate Partner Violence,' the Commission found that survivors of intimate partner violence often face numerous barriers to establishing economic independence away from their abuser. The Removing Barriers to Employment Act, however, does not explicitly identify victims of this cruel violence as a target population eligible for funding. While some survivors are eligible for services under the grant because they belong to other categories of target populations, the Act does not specifically identify them as a target population. To remedy this, the Commission recommended the Legislature expand the Act to explicitly include victims of domestic violence. AB 628 would carry out this recommendation."

Arguments in Opposition

None on file.

FISCAL COMMENTS

According to the Assembly Appropriations Committee, annual costs of approximately \$300,000, for a period of four years, to the CWDB to administer the advisory group and any new grants, if an additional \$15 million in funding is appropriated for the BBEI.

AB 1111 (Eduardo Garcia), Chapter 824, Statutes of 2017, established the original BBEI and the Budget Act of 2018 subsequently appropriated \$15 million in General Fund revenues to implement the initiative. The CWDB notes that all appropriated funds have been allocated; thus, an additional appropriation is needed to continue the initiative. The author is requesting an additional \$50 million for the BBEI in this year's state budget.

VOTES**ASM LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT: 7-0-0**

YES: Kalra, Flora, Lorena Gonzalez, Jones-Sawyer, Reyes, Seyarto, Ward

ASM JOBS, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, AND THE ECONOMY: 6-0-1

YES: Cunningham, Boerner Horvath, Chau, Petrie-Norris, Ramos, Smith

ABS, ABST OR NV: Cervantes

ASM APPROPRIATIONS: 13-3-0

YES: Lorena Gonzalez, Calderon, Carrillo, Chau, Fong, Gabriel, Eduardo Garcia, Levine, Quirk, Robert Rivas, Akilah Weber, Holden, Luz Rivas

NO: Bigelow, Megan Dahle, Davies

UPDATED

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