

Legislative Analysis



EXEMPT TEENS WITH HIGH SCHOOL EQUIVALENCY FROM YOUTH EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS ACT

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House Bill 4656 (reported from committee without amendment)

Sponsor: Rep. Kate Segal

Committee: Commerce

(Enacted as Public Act 144 of 2014)

Complete to 10-8-13

A SUMMARY OF HOUSE BILL 4656 AS REPORTED FROM COMMITTEE

The bill would specify that the Youth Employment Standards Act does not apply to or prohibit the employment of a minor 16 years of age or older who has obtained a high school equivalency certificate.

This would be an extension of the current exemption for those 16 and older who have completed the requirements for graduation from high school.

[The Youth Employment Standards Act establishes the minimum age at which minors may be employed, limits the number of hours in a day and a week that minors may work, and prohibits the employment of minors in occupations that are hazardous to a minor's health or well-being, or contrary to standards established under the act. Under the act, a "minor" is a person under the age of 18.]

FISCAL IMPACT:

The bill does not appear to have any fiscal impact.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Representatives (including cadets, as the students are called) from Michigan Youth ChalleNGe Academy testified in support of the bill. The academy, located in Battle Creek, is described as a 17½-month program for "at risk" youth. To be eligible a young person must be 16 to 18 years old and a high school dropout or at risk of dropping out. The program contains a 22-week residential component during which the cadets take classes through the Battle Creek Public Schools, with the opportunity at the end to take the GED test. According to the MYCA website, the academy is administered by the Michigan National Guard (thus the capitalized NG in the name) and funded by the U.S. Department of Defense and the State of Michigan. Meals, housing, and uniforms are provided and there are no costs to the cadets or their families.

After the residential portion of the program, students return to their communities and work with mentors for the remaining 12 months of the program to remained focus on career and personal goals. According to information from the bill sponsor, the academy has graduated over 2,400 cadets since beginning operations in 1999 with about 70% of

cadets earning a GED (and other returning to high school) and about 28% enlisting in the military.

House Bill 4656 would allow those cadets who have passed the GED to be exempt from the work hours limitations of the Youth Employment Standards Act and to work full time when they return to their communities after the residential portion of the program.

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