



Senate

General Assembly

File No. 453

February Session, 2008

Substitute Senate Bill No. 673

Senate, April 4, 2008

The Committee on Government Administration and Elections reported through SEN. SLOSSBERG of the 14th Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the Senate, that the substitute bill ought to pass.

AN ACT CONCERNING IMPROVED TELECOMMUTING PROGRAMS FOR THE STATE'S WORKFORCE.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. Section 5-248i of the general statutes is repealed and the
2 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2008*):

3 (a) The Commissioner of Administrative Services [may] shall
4 develop and implement guidelines, in cooperation with interested
5 employee organizations, as defined in subsection (d) of section 5-270,
6 authorizing telecommuting and work-at-home programs for state
7 employees where such arrangements are determined to be: [cost] (1)
8 Cost effective, (2) beneficial to the environment, (3) beneficial to the
9 reduction of traffic congestion on the state's roadways, or (4) beneficial
10 to employee productivity.

11 (b) Any employee of a state agency may be authorized by the head
12 of such state agency to participate in a telecommuting or work-at-

13 home [assignment with the approval of his appointing authority and
 14 with the approval of the Commissioner of Administrative Services.
 15 Approval of such assignment may be granted only where it is
 16 determined to be cost effective] program. Any assignment of an
 17 employee of such agency in such program shall be on a temporary
 18 basis only. [, for a period not to exceed six months and may be
 19 extended as necessary.]

20 (c) Not later than January 1, 2009, and within available
 21 appropriations, the Commissioner of Administrative Services shall
 22 establish a pilot program for telecommuting or work-at-home
 23 assignments for employees of the Departments of Environmental
 24 Protection, Developmental Services and Information Technology.

25 [(c)] (d) The Commissioner of Administrative Services shall report
 26 annually to the joint standing [committee] committees of the General
 27 Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to labor and public
 28 employees and government administration as to the extent of use by
 29 employees as provided pursuant to subsections (a), [and] (b) and (c) of
 30 this section.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	July 1, 2008	5-248i

GAE *Joint Favorable Subst.*

The following fiscal impact statement and bill analysis are prepared for the benefit of members of the General Assembly, solely for the purpose of information, summarization, and explanation, and do not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose:

OFA Fiscal Note

State Impact:

Agency Affected	Fund-Effect	FY 09 \$	FY 10 \$
Department of Administrative Services; Department of Developmental Services; Department of Information Technology; Department of Environmental Protection; Various State Agencies	GF - Cost	See Below	See Below

Note: GF=General Fund

Municipal Impact: None

Explanation

The bill requires¹ the Department of Administrative Services (DAS) to establish guidelines for telecommuting and work-at-home programs for state employees, if specific conditions are met.

The bill also requires DAS to establish, within available appropriations, a telecommuting pilot program for employees of the Departments of Environmental Protection, Developmental Services and Information Technology (DoIT).

It is currently permissible for state employees to telecommute.² It is unclear whether the bill will expand the number of employees who telecommute. To the extent that it does, a cost will result. The increased costs depend on the number of additional state employees that telecommute and how much equipment must be purchased by the state to create an at-home workstation. If the state has to purchase a computer, a printer, security software, various software programs and internet access, the costs could exceed \$2,000 per employee. If the

¹Current law "allows" DAS to establish telecommuting and work-at-home programs.

² Currently, less than 200 state employees telecommute.

employee has a personal computer, a printer, and internet service—and this equipment is deemed safe and secure by DoIT for an at-home workstation—the costs would be less. The state would also incur ongoing annual telecommuting costs; for example, updating security software.

It is unclear to what extent the pilot program will expand the number of employees who telecommute. The bill requires that the pilot program be established within available appropriations. Any increased cost as a result of the pilot program would be the same as referenced above.

The Out Years

The annualized ongoing fiscal impact identified above would continue into the future subject to inflation.

OLR Bill Analysis**sSB 673*****AN ACT CONCERNING IMPROVED TELECOMMUTING PROGRAMS FOR THE STATE'S WORKFORCE.*****SUMMARY:**

Current law allows the Department of Administrative Services (DAS) commissioner to establish guidelines authorizing telecommuting and work-at-home programs for state employees if these programs will be cost effective. To expand telecommuting and work-at-home participation, this bill (1) requires, rather than allows, the commissioner to establish these guidelines; (2) expands the reasons for developing existing programs for state employees; and (3) establishes a pilot program for the departments of Developmental Services (DDS), Environmental Protection (DEP), and Information Technology (DOIT).

The bill also requires DAS to report annually to the Government Administration and Elections (GAE) and Labor committees on telecommuting and work-at-home program participation by state employees under the existing program and the pilot program. Under current law, the commissioner reports only to the Labor Committee on the existing program. The bill does not specify whether or when the pilot program ends.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2008

EXISTING PROGRAM FOR STATE EMPLOYEES

Current law authorizes the DAS commissioner to develop and implement guidelines for telecommuting and work-at-home programs for use by individual state employees when she determines these programs will be cost effective. Any state employee is eligible to

participate pending the approval of the commissioner and his or her appointing authority (employing agency). Telecommuting and work-at-home assignments are temporary and cannot exceed six months in length, but they can be extended as necessary (see BACKGROUND).

As of July 1 2008, the bill requires, rather than allows, the DAS commissioner to develop and implement the authorizing guidelines. She must establish the guidelines for programs that, in addition to being cost effective, (1) benefit the environment, (2) reduce traffic congestion on the state's roadways, or (3) benefit employee productivity. As under current law, any state employee may be authorized to participate. However, the employee's agency head alone, rather his or her employing agency and the commissioner, determines eligibility. The assignment remains temporary, but is not limited in duration.

The law, unchanged by the bill, requires the commissioner to develop and implement the guidelines in cooperation with interested employee organizations (i.e., labor unions).

PILOT PROGRAM FOR STATE AGENCIES

By January 1, 2009, the bill requires the DAS commissioner to establish, within available appropriations, a pilot program for telecommuting and work-at-home assignments within DDS, DEP, and DOIT.

BACKGROUND

Existing Guidelines and Participation

While current law does not require the commissioner to establish telecommuting and work-at-home guidelines, in practice she has done so. During FY 06, a total of 181 telecommuting agreements were executed for employees at nine different state agencies. During FY 07, 140 telecommuting agreements were executed at six different agencies. The Department of Revenue Services is the largest user of the telecommuting program having executed 165 and 129 of the agreements, respectively, during FYs 06 and 07. (The majority of

telecommuting agreements are extended since they cannot exceed six months. Thus, the number of employees participating in the program is fewer than the number of telecommuting agreements.)

COMMITTEE ACTION

Government Administration and Election

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 13 Nay 0 (3/17/2008)