

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1354

As Reported By House Committee On:
Commerce & Labor
Appropriations

Title: An act relating to industrial insurance death benefits.

Brief Description: Regulating industrial insurance death benefit payments.

Sponsors: Representatives G. Cole, Franklin and King; by request of Department of Labor & Industries.

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
Commerce & Labor, February 12, 1993, DP;
Appropriations, March 4, 1993, DP.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE & LABOR

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 9 members: Representatives Heavey, Chair; G. Cole, Vice Chair; Lisk, Ranking Minority Member; Chandler, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Conway; Horn; King; Springer; and Veloria.

Staff: Chris Cordes (786-7117).

Background: If an injured worker dies as a result of his or her injury or illness, the Department of Labor and Industries or self-insured employer pays for burial expenses up to \$2,000. The surviving spouse or children (if there is no surviving spouse), or dependent parents (if there is no surviving spouse or children) receive an immediate payment of \$1,600. Other monthly benefits are paid to the surviving spouse according to a statutory schedule.

Summary of Bill: The maximum amount paid for burial expenses by the Department of Labor and Industries or self-insured employer if an injured worker dies as a result of his or her injury or illness is changed from \$2,000 to 200 percent of the average monthly wage (currently \$3,947). The benefit amount paid immediately on the death of the injured worker to surviving members of the worker's family is changed from \$1,600 to 100 percent of the average monthly wage (currently \$1,973.50).

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect on July 1, 1993.

Testimony For: The benefits that are provided for the families of deceased injured workers have not been increased for 21 years. These increases are needed to compensate these families more equitably for the cost of burial and for immediate expenses.

Testimony Against: None.

Witnesses: Mike Watson, Department of Labor and Industries.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 25 members: Representatives Locke, Chair; Valle, Vice Chair; Silver, Ranking Minority Member; Carlson, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Appelwick; Ballasiotes; Basich; Cooke; Dellwo; Dunshee; G. Fisher; Jacobsen; Lemmon; Linville; Morton; Peery; Rust; Sehlin; Sheahan; Sommers; Stevens; Talcott; Wang; Wineberry; and Wolfe.

Staff: Wayne Kawakami (786-7384).

Summary of Recommendation of Committee on Appropriations Compared to Recommendation of Committee on Commerce & Labor: No new changes were recommended.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect on July 1, 1993.

Testimony For: The maximum benefit currently provided for burial and funeral expenses is \$2,000 and has not been increased for 21 years. This department requests legislation providing the families with more equitable compensation for the burial expenses.

Testimony Against: None.

Witnesses: Mike Watson, Labor & Industries (pro).