FINAL BILL REPORT

HB 2300

C 224 L 94
Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Revising provisions relating to offender eligibility for unemployment compensation benefits.

By Representatives Morris, Padden, Long, King and Brough; by request of Department of Corrections and Employment Security Department.

House Committee on Commerce & Labor
Senate Committee on Labor & Commerce

Background: The Division of Correctional Industries develops and implements programs designed to offer inmates employment, work experience and training, and to reduce the tax burden of corrections. Products and services provided by Correctional Industries' programs are offered to the public, governmental agencies, non-profit organizations and the correctional system. The Division of Correctional Industries operates five classes of work programs. One of these work programs, "Class I: Free Venture Industries," allows private sector companies to set up factories within the corrections institutions. Inmates who work in Class I Free Venture Industries must be paid a wage comparable to the wage paid for similar work in the locality as determined by the director. If the director cannot reasonably determine the comparable wage, then the pay may not be less than the federal minimum wage.

In general, an incarcerated individual is disqualified from receiving unemployment benefits under the state's unemployment insurance law because he or she is not available for work. However, the unemployment insurance law does not require a worker who is on standby status with an employer to be available for other work to receive benefits. Therefore in certain situations, it is possible for an inmate to be eligible to receive unemployment benefits.

Summary: An inmate who is employed in the Class I program of correctional industries is ineligible for unemployment compensation benefits until he or she is released on parole or discharged.

Votes on Final Passage:

House   95   0

```
Senate   49    0   (Senate amended)
House    95    0   (House concurred)
```

Effective: June 9, 1994