

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6072

AS OF JANUARY 17, 1994

Brief Description: Allowing alcoholism as defense to disqualification from unemployment compensation benefits.

SPONSORS: Senators Prentice and Newhouse; by request of Employment Security Department

SENATE COMMITTEE ON LABOR & COMMERCE

Staff: Patrick Woods (786-7430)

Hearing Dates: January 18, 1994

BACKGROUND:

Currently an individual is disqualified from receiving unemployment insurance (UI) benefits if he or she has been discharged for misconduct. Individuals are eligible to requalify for benefits provided: (1) they wait five weeks; and (2) they worked and earned wages equal to five times their weekly benefit amount.

Under existing statutory provisions, alcoholism is not a defense for claimants in disqualifications from UI benefits due to misconduct. The Employment Security Department is requesting that this provision be deleted in order to conform with the federal Americans with Disabilities Act which in some situations recognizes alcoholism as a disability.

It is the department's view that alcoholism would then be treated as a factual issue to be considered under the same principles as other disabilities.

SUMMARY:

The existing statute prohibiting the use of alcoholism as a defense in disqualification for unemployment benefits due to misconduct is deleted.

Appropriation: none

Revenue: none

Fiscal Note: available