

SENATE BILL REPORT

HB 1261

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Labor & Workforce Development, March 30, 1999

Title: An act relating to modifications of motor vehicles of injured workers.

Brief Description: Modifying motor vehicles of injured workers.

Sponsors: Representatives Romero, Conway, Veloria, Cooper, O'Brien and Kenney.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Labor & Workforce Development: 3/25/99, 3/30/99 [DPA].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON LABOR & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Majority Report: Do pass as amended.

Signed by Senators Fairley, Chair; Franklin, Vice Chair; Hochstatter, Kline, Oke and Wojahn.

Staff: Jill Reinmuth (786-7452)

Background: The Department of Labor and Industries provides assistance to injured workers. If a worker has become an amputee or paralyzed because of an industrial injury, the supervisor of industrial insurance at the department may order a payment toward the costs of modifying the worker's motor vehicle. The payment may not exceed 50 percent of the state's average annual wage. For fiscal year 1999, the maximum payment is approximately \$15,239.

Summary of Amended Bill: The payment may be increased by no more \$4,000. For fiscal year 1999, the maximum payment would be approximately \$19,239. The increased payment is available to an otherwise eligible worker regardless of the date of industrial injury.

Amended Bill Compared to Original Bill: The increased payment is available to an otherwise eligible worker regardless the date of industrial injury, and not only for claims involving an injury occurring on or after the effective date of the bill.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: Modifications to motor vehicles can be very costly. The cost sometimes exceeds the amount authorized to be paid. Without modifications, injured workers who are chairbound may be limited as to where they can go, and may even be trapped in their homes.

Increasing the amount authorized to be paid will help some people. The increased amount should be available to eligible injured workers, regardless of when they were injured.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: PRO: Representative Sandra Romero, prime sponsor; Joseph Cole; Larry Dudley; Robert Stern, Washington State Labor Council.