

SENATE BILL REPORT

ESB 6368

As Passed Senate, March 14, 2000

Title: An act relating to allowing unemployment benefits during lockouts.

Brief Description: Allowing unemployment benefits during lockouts.

Sponsors: Senators Brown, Franklin, Wojahn, Prentice, Costa, Kohl-Welles, McAuliffe, Fairley, Thibaudeau, B. Sheldon, Bauer, Gardner, Rasmussen, Jacobsen, Patterson, Goings and Spanel.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Labor & Workforce Development: 2/1/2000, 2/3/2000 [DP, DNP]. Passed Senate, 2/14/2000, 27-19.

First Special Session: Passed Senate, 3/14/2000, 27-18.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON LABOR & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Majority Report: Do pass.

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

Minority Report: Do not pass.

Signed by Senator Hochstatter.

Staff: Joanne Conrad (786-7472)

Background: In a labor dispute, a "lockout" is a management action preventing employees from performing work in the organization until a labor settlement is reached. Workers may be physically prevented from entering the workplace.

Some lockouts are legal, depending upon criteria established during years of judicial case law. Some lockouts are illegal, if they are attempts to prevent legitimate union participation or to avoid good faith bargaining.

Workers who are unemployed due to a lockout may exhaust their unemployment insurance benefits, and may experience reemployment difficulties and financial stress.

Summary of Bill: Maximum unemployment insurance benefits are extended for workers who are unemployed due to a lockout. Benefits are payable until the lockout is terminated or until the worker has received 60 weeks of benefits, whichever occurs first. The employer or employer's successor entity is chargeable for the benefits.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.

Testimony For: Lockouts have a severe impact on workers and families. Long-term lockouts are especially devastating. Other employers avoid hiring locked out workers. Employees who want to return to work are still penalized economically, forced to rely on food banks and social services. Lockouts are coercive.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Senator Lisa Brown, prime sponsor; Reps. Alex Wood, Jeff Gombosky, Steve Conway; Jim Woodward, Anita Rabidue and Cory McKinley, steelworkers; Bob Marsden, USWA; Jeff Johnson, WA State Labor Council; Wesley Beck, Carol Ford, USWA; Robert Dilger, WA St. BTC; Michael Ramos, WA Assn. of Churches.