

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## EHB 1726

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As Reported By Senate Committee On:  
Government Operations & Elections, April 1, 2003

**Title:** An act relating to an employer's indebtedness to a deceased person for unpaid wages, labor, or services performed.

**Brief Description:** Changing provisions relating to an employer's indebtedness to a deceased person for unpaid wages, labor, or services performed.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Haigh and Armstrong; by request of Office of Financial Management.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Government Operations & Elections: 4/1/03 [DP].

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS & ELECTIONS

**Majority Report:** Do pass.

Signed by Senators Roach, Chair; Stevens, Vice Chair; Fairley, Kastama, McCaslin and Reardon.

**Staff:** Ronda Larson (786-7429)

**Background:** If an employee dies and has not yet been paid for work, labor, or services that he or she already performed, the law requires that his or her employer pay those unpaid wages to the employee's beneficiaries, who typically are the surviving spouse and/or children. It is the role of an executor of an estate to request the unpaid wages and determine how much each beneficiary should receive.

Because it can take time to appoint an executor, current law allows the surviving spouse to request the unpaid wages before appointment of an executor. However, the law caps at \$2,500 the amount to be paid upon the surviving spouse's request. Any remaining unpaid wages will be released to the executor when one is appointed.

**Summary of Bill:** The maximum amount of unpaid wages or salary payable to survivors of a state employee is increased from \$2,500 to \$10,000. In subsequent biennia, the Director of the Office of Financial Management is permitted to adjust the maximum amount based on the percentage increase in the Consumer Price Index for all urban consumers (CPI-U) for Seattle.

Other technical changes are made.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

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

**Testimony For:** The bill simply assists beneficiaries in receiving what they are already owed.

**Testimony Against:** None.

**Testified:** Representative Haigh, prime sponsor (pro).