

SENATE BILL REPORT

SSB 6615

As Passed Senate, February 16, 2004

Title: An act relating to employment of workers with developmental disabilities.

Brief Description: Encouraging employment of workers with developmental disabilities.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Commerce & Trade (originally sponsored by Senators Honeyford, Mulliken, Rasmussen and Prentice).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Commerce & Trade: 2/5/04, 2/6/04 [DPS].
Passed Senate: 2/16/04, 48-0.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE & TRADE

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6615 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Honeyford, Chair; Hewitt, Vice Chair; Franklin, Keiser and Mulliken.

Staff: Jennifer Strus (786-7316)

Background: To encourage employment of injured workers, an employer who hires an injured worker, who is not rehired by the employer in whose employ the worker was injured, shall be excused from paying workers' compensation premiums for that "preferred worker" under certain circumstances. The employer who hires the preferred worker is excused from paying premiums during the worker's employ but not to exceed 36 months.

Summary of Bill: The preferred worker status is provided to employers of developmentally disabled persons who have suffered a workplace injury. This status is provided even though the employer in whose employ the worker was injured continued to employ the developmentally disabled worker.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 3, 2004.

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

Testimony For: This bill will encourage employers to hire and keep as employees persons with developmental disabilities.

Testimony Against: The bill should be tailored to encourage all employers across the state to hire disabled workers. There has not been enough opportunity to review the bill; also do not get involved with workers' compensation issues and are not sure what this bill would actually do.

Testified: PRO: Ray Coleman, Terry Kohl, Rehabilitation Enterprises of Washington;
CONCERNS: Donna Patrick, DD Council; Pam Krone, Washington Protection and
Advocacy, Inc.