

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6264

As Passed Senate, February 7, 2006

Title: An act relating to allowing an injured worker to change total permanent disability pension options under certain circumstances.

Brief Description: Allowing an injured worker to change total permanent disability pension options under certain circumstances.

Sponsors: Senators Kohl-Welles, Parlette, Honeyford, Keiser, Prentice, Kline, McAuliffe and Roach; by request of Department of Labor & Industries.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Labor, Commerce, Research & Development: 1/10/06, 1/16/06 [DP]
Passed Senate: 2/7/06, 48-0.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON LABOR, COMMERCE, RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Kohl-Welles, Chair; Franklin, Vice Chair; Parlette, Ranking Minority Member; Honeyford and Keiser.

Staff: Alison Mendiola (786-7483)

Background: Injured workers who are entitled to workers' compensation total permanent disability pension can choose from three benefit options:

- Option 1 allows a worker to collect the full amount of pension, with no benefits going to the surviving spouse or family members if the worker dies from causes that are unrelated to his or her industrial injury or occupational disease;
- Option 2 allows a worker to receive an actuarially reduced benefit which upon death is continued throughout the life of and paid to the surviving spouse, child, or other beneficiary; and
- Option 3 allows a worker to receive an actuarially reduced benefit, and upon death, one-half of the reduced benefit is to be continued throughout the life of and paid to the surviving spouse, child, or other beneficiary.

Currently, workers who choose options 2 or 3 do not have the ability to restore their full allowable benefit in the event their designated beneficiary dies or they are divorced from that survivor.

Summary of Bill: Workers' compensation total permanent disability pensioners will receive their full monthly benefit if their designated beneficiary dies, or in the case of a designated spouse, they become divorced.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Testimony For: The changes proposed bring the total permanent disability pension in line with other pensions, private, and public.

Testimony Against: None.

Who Testified: PRO: Bob Malooly, Department of Labor and Industries; Robby Stern, Washington State Labor Council.