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## Commerce & Labor Committee

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### SSB 6751

**Brief Description:** Allowing individuals who left work to enter certain apprenticeship programs to receive unemployment insurance benefits.

**Sponsors:** Senate Committee on Labor, Commerce, Research & Development (originally sponsored by Senators Kohl-Welles, Roach, Pridemore, McDermott, Keiser, Franklin and Kline).

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Adds entering approved apprenticeship programs to the circumstances that are considered "good cause" for leaving work and, therefore, do not disqualify individuals from receiving unemployment benefits.</li></ul>



**Hearing Date:** 2/21/08

**Staff:** Jill Reinmuth (786-7134).

**Background:**

Individuals are eligible to receive unemployment benefits if they: (1) worked at least 680 hours in covered employment in the base year; (2) are separated from employment through no fault of their own or leave work for good cause; and (3) are able to work and are actively searching for suitable work.

Individuals are disqualified from receiving unemployment benefits if they leave work voluntarily without good cause. "Good cause" means leaving work for the following reasons:

- to accept other work;
- illness or disability, so long as the individual is not entitled to reinstatement;
- to relocate for the spouse's mandatory military transfer;
- to protect the claimant or an immediate family member from domestic violence;
- a reduction of 25 percent or more in compensation or hours;
- a change in the worksite that causes increased distance or difficulty of travel;
- deterioration of work site safety;

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- illegal activities on the worksite; or
- a change in the individual's usual work that violates his or her religious convictions or sincere beliefs.

Employers are required to pay contributions (payroll taxes) to finance unemployment benefits, unless they are exempt from coverage or reimburse the Employment Security Department for benefits paid to their former workers. Contribution rates are based, in part, on layoff experience and benefits charged to employers' experience rating accounts. Some benefits are pooled within the unemployment system. These "socialized costs" include "noncharged benefits."

**Summary of Bill:**

Individuals who leave work to enter certain apprenticeship programs are considered to have left work for "good cause" and, therefore, are not disqualified from receiving unemployment benefits. The apprenticeship programs must be approved by the Washington State Apprenticeship Training Council. The benefits paid to these individuals are not charged to their employers' experience rating accounts.

**Rules Authority:** The bill does not address the rule-making powers of an agency.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Effective Date:** The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.