
Commerce & Labor Committee

HB 3024

Brief Description: Providing uninterrupted meal and rest breaks for hospital employees.

Sponsors: Representatives Conway, Morrell, Van De Wege, Williams, Sullivan, Seaquist, Green, Campbell, Simpson, Wood and Nelson.

<p>Brief Summary of Bill</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Requires hospitals to provide employees with uninterrupted meal and rest breaks.
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Hearing Date: 1/26/10

Staff: Alison Hellberg (786-7152).

Background:

Under the Industrial Welfare Act, it is unlawful for an employer to employ workers under conditions of labor that are detrimental to their health. The Department of Labor and Industries (Department) is authorized to conduct investigations into employment conditions and to adopt rules establishing employment standards.

The rules governing rest and meal periods require a meal period of at least 30 minutes. Employees are also allowed a paid rest period of at least 10 minutes for each four hours worked. By administrative policy, the Department requires that the rest period be scheduled as near as possible to the midpoint of the four hours of working time. Where the nature of the work allows, employees may also take intermittent rest periods equivalent to 10 minutes for each four hours worked.

Summary of Bill:

Hospitals must provide employees uninterrupted 30-minute meal breaks and rest breaks of at least 10 minutes or as otherwise agreed to be provided by the employer, whichever is longer. This requirement does not apply if there is an unforeseeable emergent circumstance, which is

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defined as any unforeseen declared national, state, or municipal emergency; when a health care facility disaster plan is activated; or any unforeseen disaster or other catastrophic event which substantially affects or increases the need for health care services.

Rest breaks may be taken at any point during each four-hour work period during which the employee is required to receive the rest break. Reporting a missed break is not grounds for discrimination, dismissal, discharge, or any other penalty, threat of reports for discipline, or employment decision adverse to the employee.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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