

FINAL BILL REPORT

SSB 5362

C 331 L 13

Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Addressing the recommendations of the vocational rehabilitation subcommittee for workers' compensation.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Commerce & Labor (originally sponsored by Senators Conway, Holmquist Newbry, Keiser and Kohl-Welles; by request of Department of Labor & Industries).

Senate Committee on Commerce & Labor

House Committee on Labor & Workforce Development

House Committee on Appropriations Subcommittee on Health & Human Services

Background: Injured workers are eligible for vocational rehabilitation benefits when they cannot return to their old job due to the effects of their injury, and they lack the training or skills for a different job to become employable. Vocational benefits are discretionary, and the Department of Labor and Industry (L&I) will notify the worker and the employer of benefit eligibility.

Legislation was enacted in 2007 that established a five year vocational training pilot program, known as the Vocational Improvement Project (VIP). Under the VIP, injured workers eligible for vocational benefits have 90 days to develop and submit a training plan to L&I, and employers have 15 days to offer the injured worker a job. Time-loss benefits and vocational plan development services will stop if the employer makes a valid job offer during the 15 day period. Vocational training benefit caps are increased under the VIP, and vocational plans are required to contain an accountability agreement detailing expectations and progress measures, among other requirements.

The VIP also established a vocational rehabilitation subcommittee to provide input and oversight of the program.

A final report on the VIP was submitted to the Legislature in December, 2012. The VIP will expire on June 30, 2013.

Summary: The sunset date for the vocational rehabilitation pilot project is extended three years to June 30, 2016.

Votes on Final Passage:

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Senate 47 0
House 97 0

Effective: May 21, 2013.