

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 6286

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As of February 12, 2016

**Title:** An act relating to reimbursement of correctional employees for offender assaults.

**Brief Description:** Concerning reimbursement of correctional employees for offender assaults.

**Sponsors:** Senators Pearson, Roach, Padden, Takko, Hargrove, Billig, Hewitt and Conway.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Law & Justice: 1/25/16.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON LAW & JUSTICE

**Staff:** Melissa Burke-Cain (786-7755)

**Background:** Employees of the Department of Corrections and the Department of Natural Resources who are assaulted by an offender at work and miss work because of their injuries may receive supplemental reimbursement. The employee is ineligible for reimbursement if the assault is attributable to the employee's negligence, misconduct, or violation of any employment rules or conditions. The reimbursements are considered wages or salary. An employee has no contract right to continue receiving reimbursement if the Legislature discontinues this reimbursement program or repeals the law authorizing reimbursement.

**Summary of Bill:** Reimbursement for employees injured by an offender assault may not continue after the employees' time loss benefits end. Time loss benefits are provided to injured workers through the Department of Labor and Industries.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Requested on January 22, 2016.

**Committee/Commission/Task Force Created:** No.

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

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:** PRO: Corrections facilities are dangerous places to work. Staff at these facilities can be attacked without warning and may be seriously injured. The purpose of this bill is to extend the time past the current 365 day limit for supplemental

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wage benefits in case it takes longer than a year for the staff member to recover from an on-the-job assault by an offender. Just today, a staff member at the Clallam Bay facility was seriously injured and taken to a hospital for treatment. In the past few years Department of Corrections data shows the following number of staff who have sustained inmate assault injuries that lasted longer than a year: in 2013, four staff ; in 2014, eight staff; in 2015, seven staff.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Senator Pearson, prime sponsor; Brenda Wiest, Teamsters Local 117; Stephen Sinclair, WSDOC.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:** No one.