

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## SB 5398

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**As Passed House:**  
April 9, 2019

**Title:** An act relating to unemployment benefit eligibility for apprentices.

**Brief Description:** Concerning unemployment benefit eligibility for apprentices.

**Sponsors:** Senators Keiser, King, Van De Wege and Conway.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:**

Labor & Workplace Standards: 3/18/19, 3/21/19 [DP].

**Floor Activity:**

Passed House: 4/9/19, 96-0.

**Brief Summary of Bill**

- Exempts from the job search requirements, for purposes of unemployment benefits, persons complying with an electrical apprenticeship training program with a recognized referral system.

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### HOUSE COMMITTEE ON LABOR & WORKPLACE STANDARDS

**Majority Report:** Do pass. Signed by 7 members: Representatives Sells, Chair; Chapman, Vice Chair; Mosbrucker, Ranking Minority Member; Chandler, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Gregerson, Hoff and Ormsby.

**Staff:** Trudes Tango (786-7384).

**Background:**

The unemployment compensation system, administered by the Employment Security Department (ESD), provides partial wage replacement benefits for workers who are unemployed through no fault of their own. An individual is eligible to receive unemployment benefits if the person: (1) worked at least 680 hours in covered employment in the person's base year; (2) was separated from employment through no fault of the person

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or quit work for good cause; and (3) is able and available to work in the person's trade, occupation, profession, or business.

"Available" for work means the person is ready, able, and willing to immediately accept any suitable work that may be offered. The person must be actively seeking work using customary trade practices. Generally, actively seeking work means the person must make at least three contacts with employers per week or participate in certain job search activities, and must be able to provide evidence of those contacts and activities.

In some trades, unions have referral or dispatch programs in which the union refers members to job openings in that labor market. When a person is a member of a union with a referral program and the person is eligible for dispatch, the ESD considers the person's job search requirements as being satisfied. Union referral programs must meet certain requirements and be approved by the ESD.

**Summary of Bill:**

For the purposes of the job search requirements, "customary trade practices" includes compliance with an electrical apprenticeship training program that includes a recognized referral system under apprenticeship program standards approved by the Washington State Apprenticeship and Training Council.

A person complying with an electrical apprenticeship training program with a recognized referral system is exempt from the requirements to register for job search in the electronic labor exchange and provide evidence of seeking work.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

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

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:**

(In support) Nonunion apprenticeship programs have electronic referral systems that are the same as union hiring halls. Union apprentices have been able to do this for many years. This bill provides equality and fairness for the nonunion electrical apprenticeships.

(Opposed) None.

**Persons Testifying:** James King, Construction Industry Training Council.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:** None.