

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 6235

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As of January 23, 2020

**Title:** An act relating to exceptions to disqualification for unemployment insurance benefits when voluntarily leaving employment due to increases in job duties or changes in working conditions.

**Brief Description:** Concerning exceptions to disqualification for unemployment insurance benefits when voluntarily leaving employment due to increases in job duties or changes in working conditions.

**Sponsors:** Senators Kuderer, Lovelett, Wellman, Dhingra, Nguyen, Hasegawa, Das, McCoy, Pedersen, Conway, Darneille and Wilson, C.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Labor & Commerce: 1/28/20.

**Brief Summary of Bill**

- Provides that an individual, who left work voluntarily, is not disqualified from unemployment insurance benefits if the employer, without a commensurate change in pay, substantially increases the individual's job duties or significantly changes the individual's working conditions.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON LABOR & COMMERCE

**Staff:** Susan Jones (786-7404)

**Background:** An individual is disqualified from unemployment insurance (UI) benefits beginning with the first day of the calendar week in which the individual has left work voluntarily without good cause and thereafter for seven calendar weeks and until the individual obtains bona fide work in employment and earned wages in that employment equal to seven times the individual's weekly benefit amount.

An individual is not disqualified from benefits when the individual:

- has left work to accept a bona fide offer of bona fide work;

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- the separation was necessary because of the illness or disability of the individual or the death, illness, or disability of a member of the individual's immediate family under certain circumstance;
- the individual left work to relocate for employment of a spouse or domestic partner that is outside the existing labor market area; and remained employed as long as was reasonable prior to the move;
- the separation was necessary to protect the individual or the individual's immediate family members from domestic violence;
- the individual's usual compensation was reduced by 25 percent or more;
- the individual's usual hours were reduced by 25 percent or more;
- the individual's worksite changed, such change caused a material increase in distance or difficulty of travel, and, after the change, the commute was greater than is customary for workers in the individual's job classification and labor market;
- the individual's worksite safety deteriorated, the individual reported such safety deterioration to the employer, and the employer failed to correct the hazards within a reasonable period of time;
- the individual left work because of illegal activities in the individual's worksite, the individual reported such activities to the employer, and the employer failed to end such activities within a reasonable period of time;
- the individual's usual work was changed to work that violates the individual's religious convictions or sincere moral beliefs; or
- the individual left work to enter an apprenticeship program approved by the Washington State Apprenticeship Training Council. Benefits are payable beginning Sunday of the week prior to the week in which the individual begins active participation in the apprenticeship program.

**Summary of Bill:** An individual, who left work voluntarily, is not disqualified from UI benefits if the employer, without a commensurate change in pay:

- substantially increases the individual's job duties; or
- significantly changes the individual's working conditions.

Technical changes are made.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Requested on January 14, 2020.

**Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members:** No.

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