
HOUSE BILL 1837

State of Washington

67th Legislature

2022 Regular Session

By Representatives Bronoske, Ortiz-Self, Berry, and Pollet

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1 AN ACT Relating to restoring the state's ability to address work-
2 related musculoskeletal injuries; creating a new section; and
3 repealing RCW 49.17.360 and 49.17.370.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** (1) The legislature finds that
6 musculoskeletal injuries are a leading cause of disability,
7 accounting for more than 130,000,000 patient visits to health care
8 providers annually. These injuries cover a range of conditions
9 related to overexertion and repetitive motion, such as pinched
10 nerves, sprains, hernias, and connective tissue diseases.
11 Musculoskeletal conditions are the number one reason for visits to a
12 physician, affecting nearly half of all Americans above 18 years of
13 age.

14 (2) The legislature finds that work-related musculoskeletal
15 injuries account for at least one-third of all nonfatal work
16 injuries, are more severe than the average nonfatal injury or
17 illness, and are the most frequently reported cause of lost or
18 restricted work time. Work-related musculoskeletal injuries occur
19 from ergonomically incorrect and unregulated working practices.

20 (3) The legislature finds that many of Washington state's
21 critical industries, including agriculture and health care, are

1 described by the federal bureau of labor statistics as high-risk
2 industries for musculoskeletal injuries. These are also industries
3 that are currently experiencing significant staffing shortages.
4 Further, these injuries lead to high employer costs including
5 absenteeism, decreased productivity, and increased costs for health
6 care, disability, and workers' compensation, among other costs.

7 (4) Initiative Measure No. 841, approved by the voters in 2003,
8 repealed existing ergonomic regulations and barred the department of
9 labor and industries from regulating working practices to address
10 musculoskeletal injuries. The legislature finds that the absence of
11 regulatorily authority in this important area has contributed to
12 increases in workplace injuries and costs.

13 (5) The legislature therefore intends to repeal the prohibition
14 on regulating working practices related to musculoskeletal injuries,
15 thereby allowing targeted safety efforts to more effectively and
16 efficiently prevent these needless workplace injuries. By removing
17 this outdated barrier, the legislature will restore the state's
18 ability to more comprehensively address important workplace safety
19 issues.

20 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** The following acts or parts of acts are
21 each repealed:

22 (1) RCW 49.17.360 (Ergonomics Initiative—Intent) and 2004 c 1 s
23 1; and

24 (2) RCW 49.17.370 (Ergonomics Initiative—Definition—Rule repeal)
25 and 2004 c 1 s 2.

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