

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1468

As Passed House:
March 9, 2013

Title: An act relating to payment methods on certain claimants' benefits.

Brief Description: Modifying payment methods on certain claimants' benefits.

Sponsors: Representatives Sells, Reykdal, Manweller, Condotta, Ormsby, Van De Wege, Fagan and Green; by request of Department of Labor & Industries.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Labor & Workforce Development: 2/6/13 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 3/9/13, 97-0.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Allows the Department of Labor and Industries to issue payments to claimants, under the Crime Victims Compensation Program and the Industrial Insurance Act, using methods other than checks.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON LABOR & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 9 members: Representatives Sells, Chair; Reykdal, Vice Chair; Manweller, Ranking Minority Member; Condotta, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Green, Holy, Moeller, Ormsby and Short.

Staff: Trudes Tango (786-7384).

Background:

The Department of Labor and Industries (Department) administers the Crime Victims Compensation Program, which generally provides benefits to victims of criminal acts, subject to certain limitations. The Department also administers the Industrial Insurance Act, which pays benefits such as wage replacement and medical expenses to workers injured in the course of employment.

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.

The traditional method of paying benefits to claimants has been by checks called "warrants." Various sections of the statutes governing these programs use the term "warrant" or "check" when referencing how payment of benefits is made.

Summary of Bill:

The terms "check" and "warrants" are replaced with the broader term "payments" in various statutes governing the Crime Victims Compensation Program and the Industrial Insurance Act. Explicit language is added to the relevant statutes to allow payments to be made by debit card or other electronic means. For the purposes of industrial insurance, the claimant must request in writing to have payments made using a debit card or other electronic means, and use of these payment options is at the discretion of the Department or the self-insured employer.

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) This bill allows the Department to issue debit cards as a form of payment for time-loss benefits to injured workers. Under current statutes, the Department must issue warrants, but some workers do not have checking accounts and there are check cashing fees. This bill gives workers another choice. The Department wants to be responsive to customers. The Department will look into concerns with fraud regarding debit cards.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Joel Sacks and Vickie Kennedy, Department of Labor and Industries.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.