

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1615

As Reported By House Committee On:
Corrections

Title: An act relating to deductions from inmate wages.

Brief Description: Increasing deductions from inmate wages for crime victims' compensation.

Sponsors: Representatives Backlund, McMorris, Carrell, Sherstad, Lambert, L. Thomas, Blanton, Campbell, Benton, Cooke, Smith, Mulliken, Hargrove, Costa and Kessler.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Corrections: 2/22/95, 2/24/95 [DP].

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON CORRECTIONS

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 11 members: Representatives Ballasiotes, Chairman; Blanton, Vice Chairman; Sherstad, Vice Chairman; Quall, Ranking Minority Member; Tokuda, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Cole; Dickerson; Koster; Radcliff; K. Schmidt and Schoesler.

Staff: Antonio Sanchez (786-7383).

Background: The Department of Corrections (DOC), Division of Correctional Industries, operates five classes of work programs which provide jobs, training, and work experience for inmates. Correctional industries workers are estimated to work an average of 1,400 hours annually. The inmates receive wages for their work ranging from \$30 per month for Class IV work programs to the prevailing wage for offenders employed in Class I jobs.

The Department of Corrections is required to deduct earnings from offender wages. For inmates working in Class I work programs and inmates earning at least minimum wage, the formula must include minimum deductions of 5 percent for the crime victims compensation account, 10 percent to a department personal inmate savings account, and 20 percent for the cost of incarceration. For inmates working in Class II work programs, the deductions are the same except that the minimum deduction for

the cost of incarceration is 15 percent. For Class IV work programs, the formula must include a 5 percent deduction for the cost of incarceration.

Class I - Private sector businesses operated in DOC **\$4.50 to comparable wage.**

DEDUCTIONS:

- 5% Crime victims compensation
- 10% Inmate savings account (non-lifers only)
- 20% Cost of incarceration

Class II - DOC industries (license plates, furniture, milk) **\$.30 to \$.90 per hour.**

DEDUCTIONS:

- 5% Crime victims compensation
- 10% Inmate savings account (non-lifers only)
- 15% Cost of incarceration

Class III - DOC maintenance of prison **\$.30 to \$.50 per hour.**

DEDUCTION:

- 5% Crime victims compensation

Class IV - Services to state agencies and local government **\$.25 to \$4.25 per hour.**

DEDUCTION:

- 5% Cost of incarceration

Summary of Bill: The formula for deducting inmate wages is revised. All inmates are required to have 10 percent deducted from their correctional industries wages for the crime victims compensation fund within the public safety and education account.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: This not only sends a strong message to offenders, it also provides needed funds for victims.

Testimony Against: Any further deductions from inmates wages will serve as a disincentive for inmates to work while in prison.

Testified: Toni J. Martinez (pro); and Janeen Wadsworth, Correctional Industries (con).