

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 2724

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Labor, Commerce & Trade, February 22, 1996

Title: An act relating to payment of job modification or accommodation costs for injured workers.

Brief Description: Providing for payment of job modification or accommodation costs for injured workers.

Sponsors: House Committee on Commerce & Labor (originally sponsored by Representatives McMorris, Cole and Costa).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Labor, Commerce & Trade: 2/19/96, 2/22/96 [DP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON LABOR, COMMERCE & TRADE

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Pelz, Chair; Heavey, Vice Chair; A. Anderson, Deccio, Franklin, Fraser, Newhouse and Wojahn.

Staff: Jack Brummel (786-7428)

Background: Job modification benefits were first allowed for modification of an injured worker's old job in 1982. Job modification expenditures are paid out of the second injury fund. Legislation passed in 1988 provided for funding job modifications at a worker's new job. The Department of Labor and Industries began allowing use of job modification benefits in 1990 in situations not involving an employer, but stopped this practice in 1995.

Maximum job modification costs have been \$5,000 per worker per job modification since 1982.

Summary of Bill: The Department of Labor and Industries may pay up to \$5,000 in vocational rehabilitation expenditures for accommodations needed to (1) allow an injured worker to participate in an approved training plan, and (2) perform the essential functions of the job a worker is seeking.

The need for these accommodations must be verified by the worker's attending physician.

The total of the expenditures for an injured worker for these accommodations and any job modification may not exceed \$5,000.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: Injured workers need accommodations to participate in training plans and job search. The bill would allow the department to resume doing this.

Testimony: How the department will treat this and accommodations that must be made under the Americans with Disabilities Act is unclear.

Testified: Tom Bristow, NARPPS Management Group (pro); Dedi Hitchens, National Federation of Independent Business (pro); Tony Olson, Governor's Committee on Disability Issues and Employment (pro w/concerns); Mark Brown, Dept. of Labor and Industries (pro).