

HOUSE BILL ANALYSIS

SSB 6420

Brief Description: Allowing an application for initial determination to be in writing or in another form determined by the commissioner of the employment security department.

Sponsors: Senators Schow, Heavey, and Winsley, by request of Employment Security Department.

Hearing: February 25, 1998

BACKGROUND:

An individual must make his or her initial application for unemployment insurance benefits in writing. As the Employment Security Department moves toward implementing call centers for taking initial applications for benefits and other services that use telephone or other electronic media, the ability to make application in a form other than in writing must be authorized.

SUMMARY OF BILL:

The Commissioner of Employment Security is authorized to allow an initial application for unemployment insurance benefits to be made in a form other than in writing as determined by the Commissioner.

The Employment Security Department must ensure that unemployment insurance claimants register with a job bank to which employers have access. Claimants with employer attachment or union referral, individuals in commissioner-approved training, and claimants who are the subject of anti harassment orders are excused from this registration requirement.

The Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee must evaluate the new call center system. Issues to evaluate include promptness of payments, errors, fraud and incorrect payments. JLARC will consult with members of the Commerce & Labor Committees of the Senate and House of Representatives and the Unemployment Insurance Advisory Committee, and must contract with a private entity to conduct the performance evaluation. JLARC will report to the appropriate committees by September 1, 2001. Funding is authorized through a special program account.

RULES AUTHORITY: The bill does not contain provisions addressing the rule making powers of an agency.

FISCAL NOTE: Not requested.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.