

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5534

As of February 24, 1999

Title: An act relating to benefit eligibility for part-time workers.

Brief Description: Extending coverage under state unemployment insurance laws to part-time workers.

Sponsors: Senators Fairley and Kohl-Welles.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Labor & Workforce Development: 2/25/99.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON LABOR & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Staff: Jill Reinmuth (786-7452)

Background: The current eligibility requirements for unemployment benefits include a requirement that an individual be available for full-time work. Even if an individual meets all other eligibility requirements, a decision to seek only part-time work results in a determination that the individual is unavailable for work and ineligible for benefits. The Advisory Council on Unemployment Compensation and the National Commission on Unemployment Compensation have recommended abolishing this requirement.

Summary of Bill: The eligibility requirements for unemployment benefits are amended to permit an individual to limit his or her availability to less than full-time work when:

- the individual has performed less than full-time work during a substantial portion of the base year or has good cause; and
- a sufficient amount of suitable work exists in the labor market area.

The individual has the burden of proving that he or she performed less than full-time work during a substantial portion of the base year or has good cause for limiting his or her availability for full-time work. The Commissioner of the Employment Security Department has the burden of proving that a sufficient amount of suitable work does not exist in the labor market area.

The commissioner is authorized to make rules related to the act.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 1, 1999.

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