

5161

Sponsor(s): Senators Hewitt, Rasmussen, Honeyford, T. Sheldon, Hale, Hargrove, Horn, Haugen, Mulliken, Oke, Sheahan, Roach, McCaslin, Benton, Brandland, Deccio, Esser, Johnson, Parlette, Rossi and Schmidt

Brief Description: Repealing ergonomics rules. (REVISED FOR ENGROSSED: Establishing an ergonomics resource center.)

SB 5161.E - DIGEST

(AS OF HOUSE 2ND READING 2/18/03)

Provides that rules dealing with musculoskeletal disorders, filed on May 26, 2000, by the director, and codified as WAC 296-62-05101 through 296-62-05176, shall have no force and effect, but shall remain in place for use only as voluntary guidelines for employers. The director shall not adopt any new or amended rules dealing with musculoskeletal disorders that are substantially the same as these rules until and unless required by congress or the federal occupational safety and health administration.

Directs the department of labor and industries to: (1) Establish an ergonomics resource center, to provide expertise and assistance to employers within the state of Washington who seek training, consultation, and technical assistance to comply with the ergonomics rule adopted by the department;

(2) Create an ergonomics clearinghouse, to encourage businesses and workers to share proven methods of reducing hazards and preventing injuries;

(3) Establish a small business ergonomics task force, in consultation with the governor's small business improvement council. The department and the task force shall produce a small business ergonomics assistance guide, make it readily available to businesses, and evaluate the effectiveness of the guide;

(4) Appoint an ergonomics ombudsman. Working with safety and health professionals, the ombudsman shall assist employers and employees with problems implementing the ergonomics rule in the workplace; and

(5) Establish by administrative rule a two-year demonstration project, providing ergonomic assistance awards as approved by the director, up to five thousand dollars per award, to small businesses seeking to reduce hazards and prevent injuries through application of the ergonomics rule, to wholly or partially offset the cost of ergonomics workplace improvement. The department shall provide up to one million dollars out of existing resources to fund the awards. The department shall require an outside evaluation of the demonstration.