

SENATE BILL REPORT

EHB 1887

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Commerce & Labor, April 3, 2013

Title: An act relating to increasing educational options under vocational rehabilitation plans.

Brief Description: Ordering consideration of increased educational options under vocational rehabilitation plans.

Sponsors: Representatives Sawyer, Ryu, Green and Freeman.

Brief History: Passed House: 3/11/13, 95-2.

Committee Activity: Commerce & Labor: 4/01/13, 4/03/13 [DP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE & LABOR

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Holmquist Newbry, Chair; Braun, Vice Chair; Conway, Ranking Member; Hasegawa, Hewitt, Keiser and King.

Staff: Mac Nicholson (786-7445)

Background: Injured workers may be eligible for vocational rehabilitation benefits when they cannot return to their old job due to the effects of their injury, and they lack the training or skills for a different job. Vocational benefits are discretionary, and the Department of Labor and Industry (L&I) will notify the worker and the employer of benefit eligibility. An individual who is eligible will work with a vocational rehabilitation counselor to develop a vocational training plan that includes a job goal based on the individual's skills, interests, and medically documented limitations. Vocational training must be completed within two years, and can include formal education as part of an accredited or licensed training program approved by L&I.

The vocational rehabilitation subcommittee is composed of business and labor members appointed by the director of L&I and was created to provide recommendations regarding the vocational rehabilitation program.

Summary of Bill: The vocational rehabilitation subcommittee must consider options that would allow injured workers to attend baccalaureate institutions and provide recommendations by December 31, 2013.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: The Legislature should give injured workers some ability to attend four-year institutions rather than just the two-year institutions. Injured workers may need to attend training at two-year institutions to stay eligible for vocational benefits, even though they are attending a four-year institution on their own dime and plan on pursuing a career using that education.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Representative Sawyer, prime sponsor.