

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5476

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Commerce & Labor, February 20, 2013

Title: An act relating to the employment status of independent contractors in the news business.

Brief Description: Clarifying the employment status of independent contractors in the news business.

Sponsors: Senators Hewitt, Keiser, Conway and Holmquist Newbry.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Commerce & Labor: 2/18/13, 2/20/13 [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: Edith Rice (786-7444)

Background: Newspaper or delivery persons selling or distributing newspapers on the street or from house to house are specifically excluded from mandatory coverage for both unemployment insurance and industrial insurance purposes.

Newspaper vendors and carriers are specifically excluded from the standards established under the Minimum Wage Act that address minimum wage, overtime compensation, and recordkeeping.

Summary of Bill: The exclusions from unemployment insurance, industrial insurance, and the Minimum Wage Act for certain newspaper services are modified and made consistent. Newspaper vendors, carriers, or delivery persons selling or distributing newspapers on the street, to offices, to businesses, or from house to house are excluded. Also excluded from coverage is any freelance news correspondent or stringer who, using their own equipment, submits material for free or for a fee when the material is published.

Appropriation: None.

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.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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: This provides clarification of how things have always been done. We wanted to harmonize the different language in the statutes. Stringer is a term of art and we wanted to provide clarification.

OTHER: We already considered these individuals exempt from coverage.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Bill Will, WA Newspaper Publishers Assn.; Rowland Thompson, Allied Daily Newspapers of WA.

OTHER: Neil Gorrell, Employment Security Department.