

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SHB 1493

As Passed House:
February 24, 2021

Title: An act relating to job search monitoring.

Brief Description: Concerning job search monitoring.

Sponsors: House Committee on Labor & Workplace Standards (originally sponsored by Representatives Sells, Berry, Pollet and Ormsby).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Labor & Workplace Standards: 2/9/21, 2/12/21 [DPS].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 2/24/21, 93-3.

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Provides the Employment Security Department discretion, for a limited time, regarding the type of job search evidence required from claimants collecting unemployment insurance benefits.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON LABOR & WORKPLACE STANDARDS

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 7 members: Representatives Sells, Chair; Berry, Vice Chair; Hoff, Ranking Minority Member; Mosbrucker, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Bronoske, Harris and Ortiz-Self.

Staff: Trudes Tango (786-7384).

Background:

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

The unemployment insurance (UI) system, administered by the Employment Security Department (Department), provides partial wage replacement benefits for workers who are unemployed through no fault of their own. An individual is eligible to receive UI benefits if the individual meets certain criteria, including that the individual is able and available to work in the person's trade, occupation, profession, or business.

The person must provide the Department evidence they are actively seeking work by showing they have made contact with at least three employers per week or participated in certain job search activities at the local reemployment center at least three times per week. In developing requirements for job search monitoring, the Department must use an existing advisory committee made up of equal representation of employers and workers.

On March 25, 2020, the Governor issued Proclamation 20-30, temporarily suspending the job search requirements. Senate Concurrent Resolution 8402, passed January 15, 2021, extends the statutory waivers of Proclamation 20-30 until the termination of the state of emergency or until rescinded by the Governor or the Legislature.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

The Department is given discretion, until December 31, 2023, regarding the type of job search evidence required. Evidence of actively seeking work may include contacts with at least three employers per week or job search activities at the local reemployment center at least three times per week, or as otherwise directed by the Department.

By December 1, 2022, the Department must submit a report to the Legislature detailing the impacts of any flexibilities implemented in claimant job search methods, monitoring, and outcomes.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) The Department monitors job search activities and this bill provides the Department with flexibility to reinstate job search requirements after the suspension of those requirements ends. The Department wants flexibility until the year 2024 to provide other avenues of job searches based on local economic conditions. Job searches must be relevant and not just routine. This bill was unanimously supported by the advisory committee.

(Opposed) None.

(Other) Flexibility is appropriate, but there needs to be qualifying language so that the intention of the job search requirement is still being met.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Representative Sells, prime sponsor; Dan Zeitlin, Washington Employment Security Department; and Robert Battles, Association of Washington Business.

(Other) Bruce Beckett, Washington Retail Association.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.