

FINAL BILL REPORT

SHB 2097

C 149 L 24
Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Assisting workers in recovering wages owed.

Sponsors: House Committee on Labor & Workplace Standards (originally sponsored by Representatives Berry, Ortiz-Self, Reed, Simmons, Ormsby, Ramel, Fosse, Goodman, Lekanoff, Doglio, Pollet and Kloba).

House Committee on Labor & Workplace Standards
Senate Committee on Labor & Commerce

Background:

Various laws, such as the Minimum Wage Act (MWA) and Wage Payment Act (WPA), establish standards for the payment of wages. Wages include compensation due to an employee by reason of employment. It is unlawful for an employer to deprive an employee of their wages. An individual owed unpaid wages may file a wage complaint with the Department of Labor and Industries (Department) under the WPA, and the Department must investigate. Unless the complaint is otherwise resolved, the Department must issue either a citation and notice of assessment or a determination of compliance.

Summary:

The Department must convene a work group to develop and recommend strategies that help employees who are owed wages recover those wages and be made whole as quickly and as fully as possible when their employers violate provisions under the WPA or the MWA.

The work group must identify options to enhance the Department's ability to provide swift relief to employees. The work group must explore a wage recovery program or a similar mechanism to a wage recovery fund and procedures and mechanisms used in other states.

The work group must include representatives from the following:

- two representatives from worker advocacy organizations;

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- two representatives from employer and business advocacy organizations, with one member representing small employers;
- one representative from a civil legal aid organization; and
- one expert in employment and wage and hour law from a state postsecondary education institution.

Recommendations from the work group must be made by consensus, and for each recommendation, the work group must identify and address implementation and feasibility issues. The work group must submit a report with recommendations to the appropriate committees of the Legislature by December 1, 2025.

Votes on Final Passage:

House	95	0
Senate	49	0

Effective: June 6, 2024