

HOUSE BILL REPORT

ESHB 2438

*As Passed House
February 18, 1992*

Title: An act relating to unemployment insurance for persons reentering the work force.

Brief Description: Providing unemployment insurance for persons reentering the work force.

Sponsor(s): By House Committee on Commerce & Labor (originally sponsored by Representatives Heavey, Prentice, Franklin, R. King, Jones, G. Cole, Basich and J. Kohl).

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
Commerce & Labor, February 6, 1992, DPS;
Passed House, February 18, 1992, 98-0.

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
COMMERCE & LABOR**

Majority Report: *The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass.* Signed by 7 members: Representatives Heavey, Chair; G. Cole, Vice Chair; Franklin; Jones; O'Brien; Prentice; and Vance.

Minority Report: *Do not pass.* Signed by 3 members: Representatives Fuhrman, Ranking Minority Member; Lisk, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; and Wilson.

Staff: Chris Cordes (786-7117).

Background: To be eligible for unemployment insurance benefits, a claimant must have worked at least 680 hours in his or her base year - the first four of the last five completed calendar quarters preceding his or her application for benefits. For claimants who have left work because of temporary total disability resulting from a work-related injury or a crime victim injury, a special base year may be established that consists of the first four of the last five completed calendar quarters immediately preceding the start of the disability. This special base year allows the claimant to use wage credits that were earned before the disability began. However, the claimant must use the wage credits within six years of the start of the disability.

Persons who have experienced a long absence from the work force for reasons other than a work-related or crime victim-related disability generally will be unable to qualify for benefits while they are searching for a new job.

Summary of Bill: New unemployment insurance eligibility requirements are established for persons who are reentering the work force after an absence of 13 weeks or more resulting from temporary total physical disability because of a nonwork-related injury or illness. These claimants are allowed to establish a special base year using the wage credits that were earned in the first four of the last five completed calendar quarters before the start of the disability. The claimant must file an application with the Employment Security Department within 26 weeks after the disability commenced. A statement from the attending physician satisfies the filing requirement. The department may examine medical information related to the disability and, in case of appeal, the base year employer may also examine the medical information and require a second opinion from a health care provider selected by the employer.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: None.

Testimony Against: None.

Witnesses: None.