
**Labor & Workplace Standards
Committee**

HB 2917

Brief Description: Studying the causes of workplace injuries suffered by commercial janitors.

Sponsors: Representatives Gregerson, Sells, Reykdal, Hudgins, Walkinshaw, Kilduff, Ormsby, Orwall, Robinson, Ortiz-Self, Ryu and Pollet.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires the Department of Labor and Industries to conduct a study on commercial janitorial safety

Hearing Date: 2/2/16

Staff: Trudes Tango (786-7384) and Kelly Holler (786-7290).

Background:

Janitorial Workload, Health and Safety Workgroup

In 2014, the Department of Labor and Industries (L&I) formed a workgroup with representatives from the business and labor sectors as well as L&I staff to examine safety and workload standards for janitorial services workers and make recommendations for improvement of these standards. The workgroup studied:

- workplace safety and health regulations and policies;
- wage laws and employment standards;
- workers' compensation data on injuries and illnesses among janitorial services workers compared to other industries; and
- a 2013 study of janitorial workload, health and safety conducted by the University of Washington for SEIU Local 6.

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.

The workgroup found that janitorial services workers were at greater risk of injury than workers in other service industries. The workgroup also found that female janitors, janitors in the profession for less than a year, and janitors who prefer a language other than English file more compensable claims than individuals outside these demographics.

The workgroup issued a report in December 2014 that contained recommendations, including measures to increase access to safety information, improve training, and implement reporting systems to better identify, investigate, and improve safety issues in high-risk environments.

Safety & Health Assessment & Research for Prevention (SHARP)

L&I employs research investigators under the SHARP program, responsible for conducting research to promote safe work environments and prevent workplace injuries. In addition to research projects initiated by L&I, SHARP conducts research in response to requests by employers, workers, business associations, industry groups, and government.

Summary of Bill:

Research Study

The Department of Labor and Industries (L&I) must conduct and complete a study on commercial janitorial safety by December 31, 2020. The study must measure workers' safety and health risks associated with their work tasks, taking into consideration their work environment, workload, and the tools and equipment they use. To the extent possible, L&I must employ research methods that will allow data to be extrapolated to other comparable industries with the purpose of developing improved safety and injury prevention practices across industries.

Reporting

Beginning December 31, 2016, and until the completion of the study, L&I must report its progress and findings annually to the Labor Committees of the Legislature.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.