H-2870.1

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**SUBSTITUTE HOUSE BILL 2097**

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**State of Washington 68th Legislature 2024 Regular Session**

**By** House Labor & Workplace Standards (originally sponsored by Representatives Berry, Ortiz-Self, Reed, Simmons, Ormsby, Ramel, Fosse, Goodman, Lekanoff, Doglio, Pollet, and Kloba)

AN ACT Relating to assisting workers in recovering wages owed; adding a new section to chapter 49.48 RCW; and providing an expiration date.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 49.48 RCW to read as follows:

(1) The department of labor and industries shall 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 the employees' employers violate provisions under this chapter or the minimum wage act.

(2) The work group shall identify options to enhance the department of labor and industries' ability to provide swift relief to employees. Options the work group must explore include, but are not limited to:

(a) A wage recovery program or a wage recovery fund; and

(b) Procedures and mechanisms used in other states that ensure full and timely recovery for employees and that deter future violations.

(3)(a) Recommendations from the work group must be made by consensus, if possible. If consensus cannot be reached, recommendations of the work group must reflect the view of the majority of the members. Members with dissenting views may include their recommendations or feedback as a supplement to the report required by this section.

(b) For each recommendation, the work group must identify and address implementation issues and assess feasibility.

(4) The work group must include representatives from the following:

(a) Two representatives from employee advocacy organizations;

(b) Two representatives from employer and business advocacy organizations, with one of the members representing small employers;

(c) One representative from a civil legal aid organization; and

(d) One expert in employment and wage and hour law from a Washington state postsecondary education institution.

(5) The department shall provide staff support to the work group as needed. The work group may consult with additional representatives from other organizations and experts specializing in the subject matter, as needed.

(6) The work group must submit a report with recommendations to the appropriate committees of the legislature by December 1, 2025.

(7) This section expires December 1, 2026.

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