

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2524

As Reported by House Committee On:
Labor & Workplace Standards

Title: An act relating to establishing the state security guards industry standards board.

Brief Description: Establishing the state security guards industry standards board.

Sponsors: Representatives Obras, Thomas, Berry, Ryu, Bernbaum, Parshley, Macri, Gregerson, Ormsby, Donaghy, Fosse, Scott and Zahn.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Labor & Workplace Standards: 1/27/26, 2/3/26 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Creates the State Security Guards Industry Standards Board (Board) for establishing minimum employment standards for security guards, including minimum compensation, paid leave, employment benefits, and training.
- Directs the Department of Labor and Industries (L&I) to enforce the minimum employment standards, and allows security guards to enforce the standards through a private right of action.
- Directs the Department of Licensing to remit a portion of security guard licensing fees to L&I to support the costs of the Board.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON LABOR & WORKPLACE STANDARDS

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 5 members: Representatives Berry, Chair; Fosse, Vice Chair; Bronoske, Obras and Ortiz-Self.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 3 members: Representatives Schmidt, Ranking

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.

Minority Member; Ybarra, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; McEntire.

Staff: Kelly Leonard (786-7147).

Background:

Private Security Guards.

The Department of Licensing (DOL) licenses and regulates private security guards and private security companies. The DOL is empowered to adopt standards of professional conduct for the security guard industry.

To obtain a private security guard license, an applicant must be at least 18 years of age, be a citizen or legal resident, submit a set of fingerprints and meet certain criminal history criteria, and satisfy training requirements. To obtain an armed private security guard license, an applicant must be licensed as a security guard, be at least 21 years of age, and have a current firearms certificate issued by the Criminal Justice Training Commission.

To own or operate a private security company, a person must have at least three years' experience as a manager, supervisor, or administrator in the private security business or a related field, or otherwise be at least 21 years of age and pass an examination to measure the person's knowledge and competence in the private security business. The person must also maintain certain insurance coverage.

The DOL sets the fees for new licenses and renewals. Additional fees may apply for late renewals or transfers.

Type	Amount
Private Security Guard License	\$101
Armed Security Guard Endorsement	\$10
Private Security Guard License Renewal	\$95
Private Security Guard Company License	\$263
Private Security Guard Company License Renewal	\$237

Minimum Wage and Sick Leave.

The Minimum Wage Act (MWA) sets certain minimum wage, overtime, sick leave, and employment standards. The current statewide hourly minimum wage is \$17.13, which is adjusted annually for inflation by the Department of Labor and Industries (L&I). Overtime pay must be at least 1.5 times the employee's regular hourly rate, and employees cannot waive their right to overtime pay. It is unlawful to make certain deductions from wages and to fail to pay wages. Employers must provide employees with at least one hour of paid sick leave for every 40 hours worked. L&I may inspect places of business, investigate, and gather data regarding wages, hours, and other conditions and practices. The Wage Payment

Act (WPA) provides for administrative or court action to collect wages under the MWA and other wage laws.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

The State Security Guards Industry Standards Board (Board) is established within L&I. The Board is composed of nine members appointed by the Governor representing specified interests. The Board members serve four-year terms, except initial appointees serve staggered terms. Initial appointments must be made by September 1, 2026.

Minimum Employment Standards.

By January 1, 2028, the Board must adopt rules establishing minimum employment standards for security guards, including standards for minimum compensation, paid leave, employment benefits, and training.

The Board must investigate market conditions and the existing wages, benefits, and working conditions of security guards in all relevant geographic areas in the state. Based on this information, the Board must seek to adopt minimum employment standards that meet or exceed existing industry conditions for a majority of security guards in each relevant geographic area. The Board must review and update the minimum standards at least once every four years.

Training.

Every security guard employer must ensure that its security guards complete training provided by a certified worker organization at least once every two years. The Board must certify worker organizations to provide the training in accordance with certain standards. The training curriculum must include information on applicable employment standards and how to enforce those standards.

Enforcement.

It is unlawful for a security guard employer to violate any employment standard established by the Board. L&I must enforce the minimum wage requirements as a wage payment requirement under the WPA. For all other violations, L&I may investigate if a complaint is filed or if L&I has reason to believe that an employer has committed a violation. If L&I finds a violation has occurred, it may order the employer to pay a civil penalty of \$1,000 for each willful violation or \$2,000 for each repeat willful violation.

Any security guard injured by a violation also has a civil action in a court of competent jurisdiction to enjoin further violations and recover actual damages, plus reasonable attorneys' fees and costs.

Fees.

The DOL must remit \$25 from each private security guard license fee, armed private

security guard license fee, and private security company license fee to a dedicated account to support the costs of the Board.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The substitute bill requires the Board to convene its first meeting by December 1, 2026, rather than October 1, 2026. The substitute bill removes the requirement for L&I to deposit the funds remitted from the DOL into the account created in the bill; instead, it directs the DOL to remit the funds for deposit into the account.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Preliminary fiscal note available.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: The bill contains multiple effective dates. Please see the bill.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) The bill will establish the State Security Guards Industry Standards Board with the goal of protecting workers in these high risk professions. These workers work alone and at night, and often without support. They handle confrontations, theft, and other emergencies, and they are exposed to violence without law enforcement backup. From January 2021 through August 2025, the average turnover rate was over 113 percent. This reflects a workforce that feels under-trained, unsupported, and unsafe, and the constant churn undermines public safety. Establishing a Board is an important step. The Board brings together workers, employers, and stakeholders to establish clear, consistent, and meaningful training and professional standards. Current training requirements are minimal. Security guards receive just eight hours of training. However, the Board can establish standardized training hours and recommend de-escalation and bias training. This is about professionalizing the field. The Board will establish minimum pay floors, differential pay for high-risk job sites, and retention standards. Responsible employers are already making these investments, but the Board will create a fair baseline by setting minimum industry specific standards. The state should encourage competition through quality services, not exploitation of workers. The state should not wait for tragedy to take action to protect this workforce and the people they serve.

(Opposed) The DOL already regulates security guards and sets standards for the industry. There are already training requirements for security guards generally, and the Criminal Justice Training Commission already does specialized training for armed security guards. At best, this bill is duplicating what already exists at the DOL. If there is a need for greater training, it should be achieved through the DOL, not L&I. The training in the bill is about employment standards, not safety. Workplace safety is also covered through the

Washington Industrial Safety and Health Act, and discrimination is covered through the Washington Law Against Discrimination. The private right of action established through the bill is particularly concerning, as it will impact due process for employers and create additional and duplicative sources of litigation. Security guards are very expensive, and the bill will create affordability pressures across the industry. While there is a high turnover rate, the same can be said in other public safety fields. There are concerns with delegating the authority to set wages and other employment standards to an unelected Board appointed by the Governor. If separate wage standards are necessary, the conversation should be taking place amongst elected officials. The Board will be a costly and unnecessary exercise. This is going to increase licensing costs and wage costs. It will put security companies out of business and reduce the number of security guards in the industry. Businesses will hire security guards in-house who are not subject to licensing requirements.

(Other) The timing for implementation should be adjusted to give L&I more time for convening meetings, and for adopting rules. There should be a technical amendment to the account; it is not necessary for L&I to make the deposits.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Representative Edwin Obras, prime sponsor; Khalil Hamiduddin, SEIU Local 6; Lauri Hooks, SEIU Local 6; Demetrus Dugar; and Nathaniel Fernandez.

(Opposed) Steve Amitay, National Association of Security Companies; Morgan Irwin, Association of WA Business; Rose Gundersen, WA Retail Association; Michael Transue, Pierce County Security; Chester Baldwin, WA Business Properties Assn.; and Chester Baldwin, WA Business Properties Assn.

(Other) Tammy Fellin, Department of Labor and Industries.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.