

STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

House Committee On Business and Labor

Fiscal: Has minimal fiscal impact
Revenue: Has minimal revenue impact

Action Date: 02/17/16

Action: Do Pass.

Meeting Dates: 02/17

Vote:

Yeas: 10 - Barreto, Doherty, Esquivel, Evans, Fagan, Heard, Holvey, Kennemer, Nosse, Weidner
Exc: 1 - Buckley

Prepared By: Jan Nordlund, Committee Administrator

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Increases maximum number of weeks from five to ten for which an unemployed individual participating in an apprenticeship program is eligible for unemployment insurance benefits. Declares emergency, effective on passage.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Need to come off the job to attend consolidated training
- Reasons for consolidated training increasing in length of time
- Worker and employer share costs of apprenticeship training
- No unemployment benefit during the "waiting week"
- Whether U.S. Department of Labor requires a waiting week

EFFECT OF COMMITTEE AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

In general, an individual must be available and actively seeking employment in order to receive unemployment insurance benefits. However, existing statutes allow an individual who participates in an apprenticeship program to receive unemployment benefits if the person is off the job and attending training that does not exceed five weeks and the training is required as a condition for continued employment. While in the training program, the apprentice does not receive wages from their employer. Apprentices in the Portland Sheet Metal Program have six weeks of required training in each of the first two years of the five-year program. And because unemployment benefits are not paid for the first week of a claim, an apprentice faces two weeks of required training in which they do not receive wages or unemployment insurance benefits. The five-week limitation can also pose a problem for programs that shift the schedule of consolidated training from year to year.

Senate Bill 1544 allows an apprentice to attend required training and receive unemployment insurance benefits for up to ten weeks during a benefit year, an increase from the existing five-week limit.