

SB 298 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

House Committee On Business and Labor

Prepared By: Jan Nordlund, LPRO Analyst

Meeting Dates: 5/8, 5/17

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Extends sunset from 2017 to 2021 on provisions granting Commissioner of Bureau of Labor and Industries discretion to seek civil penalties or appear in court on housing discrimination claims. Declares emergency, effective on passage.

- Minimal expenditure impact; No revenue impact
- Senate vote 29-0

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Former contract Bureau held with U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
- Whether sunset should be eliminated
- Bureau reports they more successful settling cases under changes made by 2015

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

The Commissioner of the Bureau of Labor and Industries (BOLI) has authority to investigate and remedy housing discrimination claims. Prior to June 2015, if BOLI determined there was substantial evidence to support a housing discrimination claim, it was required to seek civil penalties if a settlement could not be reached. Similarly, BOLI was required to pursue a discrimination-related matter in court if either party elected to seek judicial remedies. The Legislative Assembly, through Senate Bill 380 (2015), granted the Commissioner discretion for a two-year period to seek civil penalties or appear in court in these circumstances. Senate Bill 298-A extends this authority for an additional four years.