

HB 2337 -1 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

House Committee On Business and Labor

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Meeting Dates: 2/6

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Increases workers' compensation benefits for permanent total disability and permanent partial disability.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

-1 (Requested by the Workers' Compensation Division) Deletes proposed changes to permanent partial disability.

BACKGROUND:

In the workers' compensation system, a permanent total disability is the loss, including a preexisting disability, of use or function of any portion of the body which permanently prevents the worker from regularly performing work in a gainful and suitable occupation. A "suitable" occupation is one in which the worker has the ability and training or experience to perform, or an occupation the worker can perform after rehabilitation. The Workers' Compensation Division reports that there are about 600 people receiving benefits for a permanent total disability, and about 10 new awards are made each year. An injured worker may receive a permanent total disability benefit for their lifetime. The maximum benefit is two-thirds of the worker's wage, capped at the average weekly wage in Oregon (currently \$974.20). The minimum benefit is 90 percent of the worker's wage or \$50, whichever is lower.

House Bill 2337 increases the permanent total disability maximum benefit to two-thirds of the worker's wage, capped at 133 percent of the average weekly wage in Oregon (which would calculate at \$1,295.69). The minimum permanent total disability benefit would increase to one-third of the average weekly wage (which would calculate at \$321.49).