

**WALKTHROUGH OF H. 351 AS PASSED BY THE HOUSE:**

**AN ACT RELATING TO WORKER'S COMPENSATION, UNEMPLOYMENT  
INSURANCE, AND SKI TRAMWAY AMENDMENTS**

**Sec. 1 – Amendments to 21 V.S.A. § 711 (Worker's Compensation  
Administration Fund)**

- Amends section so that Worker's Compensation Administration Fund can be used to pay for the costs of the occupational safety and health programs that are not funded by federal OSHA grants and matching State General Fund Appropriations. Vermont has state plan approved by OSHA (VOSHA).

**Sec. 2 – Findings (Short-Time Compensation Program)**

- Short-Time Compensation Program is barely used and administratively burdensome.
- Effectiveness went down when disregarded earnings, for partially unemployed benefits reasons, was raised from 30% to 50%.
- Short-Time Compensation Program should be repealed.

**Sec. 3 – Repeal (Short-Time Compensation Program)**

- Repeals Short-Time Compensation Program (21 V.S.A. chapter 17, subchapter 3)

**Sec. 4 – Adds 21 V.S.A. 1340a (Self-Employment Assistance Program)**

- Creates Self-Employment Assistance Program. This program used to exist, but sunsetted recently.
- Program is designed to help individuals who want to establish a business and become self-employed.

- Includes entrepreneurial training, business counseling, and technical assistance.
- Benefits would be paid in lieu of regular benefits from the Unemployment Compensation Trust Fund.
- Weekly amount is equal to regular benefits otherwise payable. Maximum is also the same.
- To receive benefits: individual must be eligible to receive regular benefits; is identified to likely exhaust regular benefits; has been approved by the Commissioner of Labor; is engaged actively in activities related to establishing a business; has filed weekly claim for the assistance.
- Requirements related to availability of work, efforts to secure work, and refusal to accept work do not apply.
- Up to 35 individuals may receive assistance.
- Authorizes Commissioner to adopt rules. Commissioner may suspend program, with authorization of Secretary of Administration and notice to House Committee on Commerce and Economic Development and the Senate Committee on Finance.

**Sec. 5 – Report (Self-Employment Assistance Program)**

- On or before January 15, 2021, Commissioner of Labor must submit written report to the House Committee on Commerce and the Senate Committee on Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs, regarding use of program. Commissioner also must present report in person.

**Sec. 6 – Amends 21 V.S.A. § 1325 (unemployment insurance experience rating-record exclusion)**

- Employer experience-rating record would not be charged for benefits paid to individual that is paid wages of \$1,000.00 or less by the employer during the individual’s base period. This exclusion used to exist in Vermont, before recent recession.

**Sec. 7 – Report**

- On or before January 15, 2020, Commissioner must submit report to House Committee on Commerce and Economic Development and Senate Committee on Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs regarding potential approaches to mitigate the impact of a single separation from employment on a small employer’s unemployment insurance experience rating and contribution rate.

**Sec. 8 – Amends 31 V.S.A. § 707 (ski tramways)**

- Allows collected fees (based on ski tramway length) to be used to contribute to ski lift mechanic education, job training, and apprenticeship programs, with approval of Passenger Tramway Board.

**Sec. 9 – Effective date**

- July 1, 2019