

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 187

BY SENATOR REESE

A RESOLUTION

To urge and request the secretary of the Louisiana Workforce Commission to submit a written report to the Senate Committee on Labor and Industrial Relations not later than October 31, 2021, on a plan to implement and administer changes to the unemployment insurance program proposed in Senate Bill 225 of the 2021 Regular Session of the Legislature.

WHEREAS, unemployment compensation is a federal-state partnership based upon federal law, but administered by each state in accordance with the laws of that state; and

WHEREAS, the overall public policy provides for taxes to be collected from an employer on a base amount of wages the employer pays his employees, for those taxes to be paid into a system and made available to fund income support to a working person who loses his job through no fault of his own, and for the perimeters of the program to make it likely that the income support provided to the worker will be used to help sustain consumer demand in local areas, particularly during economic downturns; and

WHEREAS, each state's primary role of the federal-state partnership is to directly administer the program; accept and adjudicate benefit claims and ensure timely payment of benefits to qualified and eligible claimants; and establish the taxable wage base and assess and collect those taxes on covered employment from employers; and

WHEREAS, Chapter 11 of Title 23 of the Louisiana Revised Statutes of 1950 provides relative to the operation and administration of the state's unemployment insurance program; and

WHEREAS, Senate Bill 225 of the 2021 Regular Session of the Legislature would have provided for increases to a claimant's benefits in two significant ways; and

WHEREAS, first, the legislation provided that on the same amount of base-period wages, a qualified claimant would have been eligible for a proposed one-twelfth to one-

twentieth of the average of his base-period wages, depending on the state's average unemployment rate, instead of present law's limitation of one twenty-fifth of the average of the claimant's base period wages; and

WHEREAS, second, the legislation increased the maximum weekly benefit amount that any qualified claimant could have received by thirty dollars per week in years that Procedures 1, 2, and 3 are applicable, and sixteen dollars per week in years that Procedure 4 is applicable; and

WHEREAS, Senate Bill 225 also made changes to the number of weeks that a claimant could claim his maximum amount of benefits depending on the state's average unemployment rate so that when the rate was above nine percent, a claimant would be eligible for a maximum of one-twentieth of the average of his base period wages per week for up to twenty weeks and when the rate is at or below five and one-half percent, a claimant would be eligible for a maximum of one-twelfth of the average of his base period wages per week for twelve weeks; and

WHEREAS, to further help the system accomplish its goals, the bill created an extended unemployment insurance program for claimants enrolled and participating in approved training that provided up to eight additional weeks of benefits; and

WHEREAS, several states have implemented unemployment insurance programs similar to the proposed changes in Senate Bill 225, and those programs have yielded positive results, including workforce attachment and solvency of the state's unemployment trust fund.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby urge and request the secretary of the Louisiana Workforce Commission to submit a written report to the Senate Committee on Labor and Industrial Relations, and as required by R.S. 24:771 and 772, not later than October 31, 2021, on a plan to implement and administer changes to the unemployment insurance program proposed by Senate Bill 225 of the 2021 Regular Session of the Legislature.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the plan shall include all of the following:

(1) An outline of administrative steps necessary to implement the provisions of Senate Bill 225.

(2) Specific challenges to implementation and strategies to address those challenges.

(3) Resources required for implementation and possible sources of funding, including funding from the administrative grant, Reed Act, CARES, or other federal funding and the commission's penalty and interest fund.

(4) A timeline for implementation.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the secretary of the Louisiana Workforce Commission.

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE