

**SENATE . . . . . No. 1214**

**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

PRESENTED BY:

***Patricia D. Jehlen***

*To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in General Court assembled:*

The undersigned legislators and/or citizens respectfully petition for the adoption of the accompanying bill:

An Act to increase unemployment insurance benefits for low wage workers..

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	
<i>Patricia D. Jehlen</i>	<i>Second Middlesex</i>	
<i>James B. Eldridge</i>	<i>Middlesex and Worcester</i>	<i>3/2/2021</i>
<i>Jason M. Lewis</i>	<i>Fifth Middlesex</i>	<i>3/12/2021</i>
<i>Eric P. Lesser</i>	<i>First Hampden and Hampshire</i>	<i>3/15/2021</i>
<i>Walter F. Timilty</i>	<i>Norfolk, Bristol and Plymouth</i>	<i>3/17/2021</i>
<i>Joseph A. Boncore</i>	<i>First Suffolk and Middlesex</i>	<i>3/26/2021</i>
<i>Christopher Hendricks</i>	<i>11th Bristol</i>	<i>3/29/2021</i>
<i>Michael O. Moore</i>	<i>Second Worcester</i>	<i>3/29/2021</i>
<i>Sal N. DiDomenico</i>	<i>Middlesex and Suffolk</i>	<i>4/6/2021</i>
<i>Joanne M. Comerford</i>	<i>Hampshire, Franklin and Worcester</i>	<i>4/6/2021</i>
<i>Maria Duaine Robinson</i>	<i>6th Middlesex</i>	<i>4/6/2021</i>
<i>Erika Uytterhoeven</i>	<i>27th Middlesex</i>	<i>4/9/2021</i>
<i>Mark C. Montigny</i>	<i>Second Bristol and Plymouth</i>	<i>4/12/2021</i>
<i>Patrick M. O'Connor</i>	<i>Plymouth and Norfolk</i>	<i>4/12/2021</i>
<i>Michael J. Barrett</i>	<i>Third Middlesex</i>	<i>4/14/2021</i>

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By Ms. Jehlen, a petition (accompanied by bill, Senate, No. 1214) of Patricia D. Jehlen, James B. Eldridge, Jason M. Lewis, Eric P. Lesser and other members of the General Court for legislation to increase unemployment insurance benefits for low wage workers.. Labor and Workforce Development.

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**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

**In the One Hundred and Ninety-Second General Court  
(2021-2022)**

An Act to increase unemployment insurance benefits for low wage workers..

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:*

1 SECTION 1. Subsection (w) of section 1 of chapter 151A of the General Laws, as  
2 appearing in the 2018 Official Edition, is hereby amended by striking out, in lines 343 and 344,  
3 the words “reported for the highest quarter” and inserting in place thereof the following words:-

4 wages reported for the highest quarter; and provided further, that if such deeming renders  
5 the individual ineligible for unemployment benefits, the amount shall be 1/26 of the total wages  
6 reported in the 2 quarters.

7 SECTION 2. Subsection (a) of section 24 of chapter 151A of the general laws, as so  
8 appearing, is hereby amended by striking in line 4, the words “thirty times the weekly benefit  
9 rate,” and inserting the words:-

10 15 times the average weekly wage, provided that when there is a reduction in the benefit  
11 rate from 30 times to 26 times the benefit rate under subsection (a) of section 30, an individual

12 shall have been paid wages in the base period amounting to at least 13 times the average weekly  
13 wage; provided that if the individual is thereby rendered ineligible for unemployment benefits,  
14 the individual shall have been paid wages in two quarters of the base period;

15 SECTION 3. Section 29 of chapter 151A of the General Laws, as so appearing, is hereby  
16 amended by striking out subsection (a) and inserting in place thereof the following subsection:-

17 (a) An individual in total unemployment and otherwise eligible for benefits shall be paid  
18 for each week of unemployment an amount equal to fifty percent of the individual's average  
19 weekly wage in their base period, rounded to the next lower full dollar amount; but not more,  
20 exclusive of dependency benefits, than fifty-seven and one-half per cent of the average weekly  
21 wage of all employees covered by this chapter; nor less than twenty percent of the average  
22 weekly wage of all employees covered by this chapter or seventy-five percent of the individual's  
23 average weekly wage, whichever is less, exclusive of dependency benefits. On or before the first  
24 day of October of each year, the total wages reported on contribution reports for the twelve  
25 months ending March the thirty-first of such year shall be divided by the average monthly  
26 number of insured employees (determined by dividing the total insured employees reported on  
27 contribution reports for the twelve months ending March the thirty-first by twelve). The average  
28 annual wage thus obtained shall be divided by fifty-two and the average weekly wage thus  
29 determined, rounded to the nearest cent. Fifty-seven and one-half per cent of this amount,  
30 rounded to the next lower full dollar amount shown shall establish the maximum weekly benefit  
31 rate paid any individual whose benefit year commences on or after the first Sunday of October  
32 of each year and prior to the first Sunday of October the following year. Twenty per cent of the  
33 average weekly wage of all employees covered by this chapter, rounded to the next lower full  
34 dollar amount shown shall establish the minimum weekly benefit rate paid any individual whose

35 benefit year commences on or after the first Sunday of October each year and prior to the first  
36 Sunday of October the following year, provided that the weekly benefit amount which an  
37 individual may receive during the individual's benefit year exclusive of dependency benefits is  
38 not greater than seventy-five per cent of the individual's average weekly wage.

39 SECTION 4. Section 30 of chapter 151A of the General Laws, as so appearing, is hereby  
40 amended by striking out subsection (a) and inserting in place thereof the following subsection:-

41 (a) Except as provided in subsection (b), the total benefits which an unemployed  
42 individual may receive during his benefit year shall be an amount equal to sixty percent of his  
43 wages in the base period, or an amount equal to 30 times the individual's weekly benefit rate in  
44 the base period, whichever is less, plus dependency benefits payable under section 29; provided,  
45 however, that if in any month the average local unemployment for the last 12 months, as  
46 determined by the United States Department of Labor is equal to or below 5.1 per cent in each of  
47 the 10 metropolitan statistical areas of the commonwealth, the total benefits which an  
48 unemployed individual who then files a claim may receive during his benefit year shall be an  
49 amount equal to 60 per cent of his wages in the base period or an amount equal to 26 times the  
50 individual's weekly benefit rate, whichever is less, plus dependency benefits payable under said  
51 section 29; provided further that no such reduction in benefit rate from 30 times to 26 times the  
52 weekly benefit rate due to the operation of this section shall occur to an individual's total benefit  
53 amount if, in any month during the individual's benefit year, the requirements of this section  
54 have not been met. If such amount includes a fractional part of a dollar, it shall be rounded to the  
55 next lower full dollar amount.