

**SENATE . . . . . No. 2598**

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**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**



CHARLES D. BAKER  
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KARYN POLITO  
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

*March 16, 2020*

To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives,

I am filing for your consideration a bill entitled “An Act Authorizing Waiver of the One Week Waiting Period for Unemployment Benefits.” This legislation provides immediate financial relief to persons who become separated from work as a result of the outbreak of COVID-19 or as a consequence of actions taken to prevent the spread of the virus.

The bill directs the Director of the Department of Unemployment Assistance (DUA) to waive the normal one-week waiting period and immediately begin paying benefits to any otherwise eligible person who has become separated from work as a result of any circumstance relating to or resulting from the outbreak of the COVID-19 virus or measures taken in response to state of emergency I announced on March 10, 2020. This means that DUA would be authorized to pay benefits without delay to persons who become unemployed because of lay-offs or business shutdowns taken in response to the virus, because of quarantine orders or directives or illness that prevents them from leaving their homes, or because they must care for a sick or quarantined family member or attend to children who are at home due to school closures.

In order to be certain that unemployment benefits will be available to all persons who may face interruption in work as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak, the Director of DUA will immediately be filing emergency regulations to ensure similar flexibility in the application of rules that do not require a statutory adjustment.

I urge your prompt enactment of this legislation.

Respectfully submitted,

Charles D. Baker

Governor

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Charles D. Baker,  
*Governor*

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Senate, March 16, 2020 -- Message from His Excellency the Governor recommending legislation to authorize the waiver of the one-week waiting period for unemployment benefits.

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## The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

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In the One Hundred and Ninety-First General Court  
(2019-2020)  
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An Act Authorizing Waiver of the One Week Waiting Period for Unemployment Benefits.

*Whereas*, The deferred operation of this act would tend to defeat its purpose, which is to forthwith to make certain changes in law in response to a public health emergency, each of which is immediately necessary to carry out to accomplish important public purposes, therefore it is hereby declared to be an emergency law, necessary for the immediate preservation of the public convenience.

*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. Notwithstanding section 23 of chapter 151A of the General Laws, the  
2           director of unemployment assistance shall waive the one-week waiting period for any person  
3           making a claim for unemployment benefits who has become separated from work as a result of  
4           any circumstance relating to or resulting from the outbreak of the 2019 novel Coronavirus or  
5           “COVID-19” or the effects of the Governor’s March 10, 2020 declaration of a state of  
6           emergency.

7           This section will expire 90 days after termination of said state of emergency.

8           SECTION 2. Section 1 shall take effect on March 10, 2020.