

2010 VIRGINIA GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Summary of Unemployment Compensation Bills

PASSED

HB 535/Nixon - minimum earnings requirement. Postpones by one year the second scheduled increase (from \$2,700 to \$3,000) in the minimum amount of wages an employee must have in order to be eligible for benefits. *(The business community offered and supported this effort.)*

HB 550/D. Marshall - repayment of benefits. Allows the Virginia Employment Commission (VEC) to negotiate the terms of repayment for benefits to which a recipient is not entitled.

FAILED

HB 177/Morrissey - eligibility of seasonal tax preparation service employees. Disqualifies a seasonal employee of a tax preparation firm from receiving benefits outside of the tax preparation season if the individual was notified in writing at the time of his hiring that his employment is only for the term of the tax preparation season.

HB 178/Morrissey - eligibility of seasonal or temporary workers. Disqualifies an unemployed individual for benefits if he was provided with written notice, and signed an acknowledgment of receipt of such notice, by his employer stating that his employment is temporary or seasonal and will be terminated by a date certain or upon the completion of seasonal work specified in the written notice.

HB 252/Merricks - waiver of overpayment. Requires the VEC to waive an individual's obligation to repay benefit overpayments under certain circumstances.

HB 647/Armstrong - part-time employment and training programs. Provides that certain individuals who have exhausted eligibility for benefits and who are enrolled in approved training programs are eligible for up to 26 weeks of additional benefits. The bill also waives the current law requirement that individuals receiving these benefits must be looking for full-time work. Additionally, the measure provides benefits to certain individuals seeking only part-time work. Both expanded provisions are part of the \$7 billion "UI modernization" effort encouraged in the 2009 stimulus bill. *(The business community opposed this measure as an unwarranted expansion of benefits.)*

This summary is provided for the Virginia Chamber's Business Task Force on Unemployment Compensation and its members. It summarizes important unemployment compensation issues acted on in the 2010 session. For bill copies or complete legislative histories, please contact the Virginia Chamber or access the state's Legislative Information System at:

<http://leg1.state.va.us/>

HJ 23/R. Marshall – study; claims hearings. Directs the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission (JLARC) to study the effectiveness of deputy-level claims hearings.

HJ 49/Merricks - study; benefit overpayments. Directs JLARC to study benefit overpayments caused by VEC administrative errors.

SB 239/Watkins – compelling reason and training programs. Provides that certain individuals who have exhausted eligibility for benefits and who are enrolled in approved training programs are eligible for up to 26 weeks of additional benefits. The bill also waives the current law requirement that individuals receiving these benefits must also be looking for full-time work. Additionally, the measure provides that an individual who voluntarily quits work for a “compelling reason” is eligible for benefits. With some exceptions, benefits are not now paid for voluntary quits. Both expanded provisions are part of the \$7 billion “UI modernization” effort encouraged in the 2009 stimulus bill. SBs 562/Puckett and 666/Locke are incorporated. (*The business community opposed this measure as an unwarranted expansion of benefits.*)

Last updated 03/09/10

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