

1                           A bill to be entitled  
2           An act relating to unemployment compensation;  
3           amending s. 1, ch. 97-29, Laws of Florida;  
4           extending for an additional year a temporary  
5           reduction in certain contribution rates for  
6           specified employers; amending 443.101, F.S.;  
7           clarifying provisions relating to  
8           disqualification for benefits; amending s.  
9           443.111, F.S.; extending for an additional year  
10          a temporary increase in the maximum weekly and  
11          yearly benefit amounts for unemployment  
12          compensation benefits; specifying benefit  
13          years; providing an effective date.

14

15 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

16

17           Section 1. Section 1 of chapter 97-29, Laws of  
18 Florida, is amended to read:19           Section 1. Notwithstanding section 443.131(3), Florida  
20 Statutes, for the 1998 and 1999 calendar years ~~year~~ or any  
21 quarter thereof, the division shall subtract 0.5 percent from  
22 each employer's assigned tax rate, except for those employers  
23 who are assigned the initial rate or who have been assigned a  
24 contribution rate of 5.4 percent or higher for more than 36  
25 months. Notwithstanding section 443.131(2), Florida Statutes,  
26 for the 1998 and 1999 calendar years ~~year~~, each employer whose  
27 employment record has been chargeable with benefit payments  
28 for less than eight calendar quarters shall pay contributions  
29 at the initial rate of 2 percent.30           Section 2. Paragraph (a) of subsection (1) of section  
31 443.101, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

1           443.101 Disqualification for benefits.--An individual  
2 shall be disqualified for benefits:

3           (1)(a) For the week in which he or she has voluntarily  
4 left his or her work without good cause attributable to his or  
5 her employing unit or in which the individual has been  
6 discharged by his or her employing unit for misconduct  
7 connected with his or her work, if so found by the division.  
8 The term "work," as used in this paragraph, means any work,  
9 whether full-time, part-time, or temporary.

10           1. Disqualification for voluntarily quitting shall  
11 continue for the full period of unemployment next ensuing  
12 after he or she has left his or her full-time, part-time, or  
13 temporary work voluntarily without good cause and until such  
14 individual has earned income equal to or in excess of 17 times  
15 his or her weekly benefit amount; "good cause" as used in this  
16 subsection shall include only such cause as is attributable to  
17 the employing unit or which consists of illness or disability  
18 of the individual requiring separation from his or her work.  
19 No other disqualification may be imposed.An individual shall  
20 not be disqualified under this subsection for voluntarily  
21 leaving temporary work to return immediately when called to  
22 work by the permanent employing unit that temporarily  
23 terminated his or her work within the previous 6 calendar  
24 months.

25           2. Disqualification for being discharged for  
26 misconduct connected with his or her work shall continue for  
27 the full period of unemployment next ensuing after having been  
28 discharged and until such individual has become reemployed and  
29 has earned income not less than 17 times his or her weekly  
30 benefit amount and for not more than 52 weeks which  
31 immediately follow such week, as determined by the division in

1 each case according to the circumstances in each case or the  
2 seriousness of the misconduct, pursuant to rules of the  
3 division enacted for determinations of disqualification for  
4 benefits for misconduct.

5 Section 3. Subsection (3) and paragraph (a) of  
6 subsection (5) of section 443.111, Florida Statutes, are  
7 amended to read:

8 443.111 Payment of benefits.--

9 (3) WEEKLY BENEFIT AMOUNT.--An individual's "weekly  
10 benefit amount" shall be an amount equal to one twenty-sixth  
11 of the total wages for insured work paid during that quarter  
12 of the base period in which such total wages paid were the  
13 highest, but not less than \$32 or more than \$275~~\$250~~. For  
14 claims with benefit years beginning July 1, 1998 ~~1997~~, through  
15 June 30, 1999 ~~December 31, 1997~~, an additional 5 percent of  
16 the weekly benefit amount shall be added for the first 8  
17 compensable weeks of benefits paid, not to exceed \$288~~\$262~~.  
18 ~~For benefit years beginning January 1, 1998, an individual's~~  
19 ~~"weekly benefit amount" shall be an amount equal to one~~  
20 ~~twenty-sixth of the total wages for insured work paid during~~  
21 ~~that quarter of the base period in which such total wages paid~~  
22 ~~were the highest, but not less than \$32 or more than \$275. For~~  
23 ~~claims with benefit years beginning January 1, 1998, through~~  
24 ~~June 30, 1998, an additional 5 percent of the weekly benefit~~  
25 ~~amount shall be added for the first 8 compensable weeks of~~  
26 ~~benefits paid, not to exceed \$288.~~Such weekly benefit amount,  
27 if not a multiple of \$1, shall be rounded downward to the  
28 nearest full dollar amount. The maximum weekly benefit amount  
29 in effect at the time the claimant establishes an individual  
30 weekly benefit amount shall be the maximum benefit amount  
31 applicable throughout the claimant's benefit year.

1 (5) DURATION OF BENEFITS.--

2 (a)1. Any otherwise eligible individual shall be  
3 entitled during any benefit year to a total amount of benefits  
4 equal to 25 percent of the total wages in the base period, not  
5 to exceed ~~\$7,150~~\$6,500. For claims with benefit years  
6 beginning July 1, ~~1998~~1997, through ~~June 30, 1999~~December  
7 ~~31, 1997~~, an additional amount equal to 5 percent of the  
8 weekly benefit amount multiplied by 8 shall be added to the  
9 calculated total amount of benefits, the sum of which may not  
10 exceed ~~\$7,254~~\$6,596. ~~For benefit years beginning January 1,~~  
11 ~~1998, any otherwise eligible individual shall be entitled~~  
12 ~~during any benefit year to a total amount of benefits equal to~~  
13 ~~25 percent of the total wages in the base period, not to~~  
14 ~~exceed \$7,150. For claims with benefit years beginning January~~  
15 ~~1, 1998, through June 30, 1998, an additional amount equal to~~  
16 ~~5 percent of the weekly benefit amount multiplied by 8 shall~~  
17 ~~be added to the calculated total amount of benefits, the sum~~  
18 ~~of which may not exceed \$7,254.~~ However, such total amount of  
19 benefits, if not a multiple of \$1, shall be rounded downward  
20 to the nearest full dollar amount. Such benefits shall be  
21 payable at a weekly rate no greater than the weekly benefit  
22 amount.

23 2. For the purposes of this subsection, wages shall be  
24 counted as "wages for insured work" for benefit purposes with  
25 respect to any benefit year only if such benefit year begins  
26 subsequent to the date on which the employing unit by whom  
27 such wages were paid has satisfied the conditions of this  
28 chapter with respect to becoming an employer.

29 Section 4. This act shall take effect July 1, 1998.  
30  
31