

By the Committee on Business Development & International Trade and Representatives Bitner, Starks, Fasano, Constantine and Lynn

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 s. 443.101, F.S.;  
 7           clarifying provisions relating to  
 8           disqualification for benefits; amending s.  
 9           443.111, F.S.; extending for a specified period  
 10          a temporary increase in the maximum weekly and  
 11          yearly benefit amounts for unemployment  
 12          compensation benefits; specifying benefit  
 13          years; amending s. 443.231, F.S.; providing an  
 14          extension for the Florida Training Investment  
 15          Program; providing an effective date.

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

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 19           Section 1. Section 1 of chapter 97-29, Laws of  
 20 Florida, is amended to read:

21           Section 1. Notwithstanding section 443.131(3), Florida  
 22 Statutes, for the 2000 ~~1998~~ calendar year or any quarter  
 23 thereof, the division shall subtract 0.5 percent from each  
 24 employer's assigned tax rate, except for those employers who  
 25 are assigned the initial rate or who have been assigned a  
 26 contribution rate of 5.4 percent or higher for more than 36  
 27 months. Notwithstanding section 443.131(2), Florida Statutes,  
 28 for the 2000 ~~1998~~ calendar year, each employer whose  
 29 employment record has been chargeable with benefit payments  
 30 for less than eight calendar quarters shall pay contributions  
 31 at the initial rate of 2 percent.

1 Section 2. Paragraph (a) of subsection (1) of section  
2 443.101, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

3 443.101 Disqualification for benefits.--An individual  
4 shall be disqualified for benefits:

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

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

27 2. Disqualification for being discharged for  
28 misconduct connected with his or her work shall continue for  
29 the full period of unemployment next ensuing after having been  
30 discharged and until such individual has become reemployed and  
31 has earned income not less than 17 times his or her weekly

1 benefit amount and for not more than 52 weeks that ~~which~~  
2 immediately follow such week, as determined by the division in  
3 each case according to the circumstances in each case or the  
4 seriousness of the misconduct, pursuant to rules of the  
5 division enacted for determinations of disqualification for  
6 benefits for misconduct.

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

10 443.111 Payment of benefits.--

11 (3) WEEKLY BENEFIT AMOUNT.--An individual's "weekly  
12 benefit amount" shall be an amount equal to one twenty-sixth  
13 of the total wages for insured work paid during that quarter  
14 of the base period in which such total wages paid were the  
15 highest, but not less than \$32 or more than ~~\$275~~\$250. For  
16 claims with benefit years beginning January 1, 2000 ~~July 1,~~  
17 ~~1997~~, through December 31, 2000 ~~1997~~, an additional 5 percent  
18 of the weekly benefit amount shall be added for the first 8  
19 compensable weeks of benefits paid, not to exceed ~~\$288~~\$262.  
20 ~~For benefit years beginning January 1, 1998, an individual's~~  
21 ~~"weekly benefit amount" shall be an amount equal to one~~  
22 ~~twenty-sixth of the total wages for insured work paid during~~  
23 ~~that quarter of the base period in which such total wages paid~~  
24 ~~were the highest, but not less than \$32 or more than \$275. For~~  
25 ~~claims with benefit years beginning January 1, 1998, through~~  
26 ~~June 30, 1998, an additional 5 percent of the weekly benefit~~  
27 ~~amount shall be added for the first 8 compensable weeks of~~  
28 ~~benefits paid, not to exceed \$288.~~Such weekly benefit amount,  
29 if not a multiple of \$1, shall be rounded downward to the  
30 nearest full dollar amount. The maximum weekly benefit amount  
31 in effect at the time the claimant establishes an individual

1 weekly benefit amount shall be the maximum benefit amount  
2 applicable throughout the claimant's benefit year.

3 (5) DURATION OF BENEFITS.--

4 (a)1. Any otherwise eligible individual shall be  
5 entitled during any benefit year to a total amount of benefits  
6 equal to 25 percent of the total wages in the base period, not  
7 to exceed \$7,150~~\$6,500~~. For claims with benefit years  
8 beginning January 1, 2000~~July 1, 1997~~, through December 31,  
9 2000~~1997~~, an additional amount equal to 5 percent of the  
10 weekly benefit amount multiplied by 8 shall be added to the  
11 calculated total amount of benefits, the sum of which may not  
12 exceed \$7,254~~\$6,596~~. ~~For benefit years beginning January 1,~~  
13 ~~1998, any otherwise eligible individual shall be entitled~~  
14 ~~during any benefit year to a total amount of benefits equal to~~  
15 ~~25 percent of the total wages in the base period, not to~~  
16 ~~exceed \$7,150. For claims with benefit years beginning January~~  
17 ~~1, 1998, through June 30, 1998, an additional amount equal to~~  
18 ~~5 percent of the weekly benefit amount multiplied by 8 shall~~  
19 ~~be added to the calculated total amount of benefits, the sum~~  
20 ~~of which may not exceed \$7,254.~~ However, such total amount of  
21 benefits, if not a multiple of \$1, shall be rounded downward  
22 to the nearest full dollar amount. Such benefits shall be  
23 payable at a weekly rate no greater than the weekly benefit  
24 amount.

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

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1           Section 4. Subsection (8) of section 443.231, Florida  
2 Statutes, is amended to read:

3           443.231 Florida Training Investment Program.--The  
4 Florida Training Investment Program is designed to extend  
5 additional benefit eligibility to dislocated workers  
6 throughout Florida who have lost their jobs, have limited  
7 marketable skills, and enroll in vocational training intended  
8 to lead to employment in a recognized occupation for which  
9 there is labor market demand. Pursuant thereto:

10           (8) TERMINATION.--The Florida Training Investment  
11 Program shall terminate on June 30, 2002 ~~1999~~. No benefits  
12 shall be paid under this program to any dislocated worker for  
13 training that occurs after June 30, 2002 ~~1999~~.

14           Section 5. This act shall take effect July 1, 1999.  
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