

By the Committee on Finance & Taxation and Representatives
Albright, Bitner, Fasano, Brown and Starks

1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to unemployment compensation;
3 amending s. 1, ch. 97-29, Laws of Florida;
4 directing the Division of Unemployment
5 Compensation to reduce employers' tax rates for
6 the year 2000; providing exceptions; providing
7 a reduced initial tax rate for certain
8 employers for the year 2000; amending s.
9 443.101, F.S.; clarifying provisions relating
10 to disqualification for benefits; amending s.
11 443.111, F.S.; providing a temporary increase
12 in the maximum weekly and yearly benefit
13 amounts for unemployment compensation benefits
14 for a specified period; amending s. 443.231,
15 F.S.; providing an extension for the Florida
16 Training Investment Program; providing
17 effective dates.

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

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

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

1 for less than eight calendar quarters shall pay contributions
2 at the initial rate of 2 percent.

3 Section 2. Paragraph (a) of subsection (1) of section
4 443.101, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

5 443.101 Disqualification for benefits.--An individual
6 shall be disqualified for benefits:

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

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

29 2. Disqualification for being discharged for
30 misconduct connected with his or her work shall continue for
31 the full period of unemployment next ensuing after having been

1 discharged and until such individual has become reemployed and
2 has earned income not less than 17 times his or her weekly
3 benefit amount and for not more than 52 weeks that ~~which~~
4 immediately follow such week, as determined by the division in
5 each case according to the circumstances in each case or the
6 seriousness of the misconduct, pursuant to rules of the
7 division enacted for determinations of disqualification for
8 benefits for misconduct.

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

12 443.111 Payment of benefits.--

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

1 nearest full dollar amount. The maximum weekly benefit amount
2 in effect at the time the claimant establishes an individual
3 weekly benefit amount shall be the maximum benefit amount
4 applicable throughout the claimant's benefit year.

5 (5) DURATION OF BENEFITS.--

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

27 2. For the purposes of this subsection, wages shall be
28 counted as "wages for insured work" for benefit purposes with
29 respect to any benefit year only if such benefit year begins
30 subsequent to the date on which the employing unit by whom
31

1 such wages were paid has satisfied the conditions of this
2 chapter with respect to becoming an employer.

3 Section 4. Effective June 30, 1999, subsection (8) of
4 section 443.231, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

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

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

16 Section 5. Except as otherwise provided herein, this
17 act shall take effect July 1, 1999.

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20 HOUSE SUMMARY

21 Directs the Division of Unemployment Compensation to
22 subtract 0.5 percent from employers' unemployment
23 compensation tax rates for the year 2000, with certain
24 exceptions. Provides a reduced initial tax rate of 2
25 percent for certain employers for the year 2000.
26 Clarifies provisions relating to disqualification for
27 benefits. Provides a temporary increase in the maximum
28 weekly and yearly benefit amounts for unemployment
29 compensation benefits for the year 2000. Provides an
30 extension for the Florida Training Investment Program to
31 2002.