

By Senator Wasserman Schultz

34-595-03

1                                   A bill to be entitled  
2           An act relating to economic recovery; providing  
3           legislative intent; providing criteria,  
4           requirements, and limitations on certain  
5           training; providing for power and authority of  
6           the Agency for Workforce Innovation; providing  
7           requirements for expenditure of certain funds;  
8           amending s. 443.036, F.S.; providing a  
9           definition and an application of an alternative  
10          base period; providing requirements and  
11          limitations; specifying, for a limited time  
12          period, alternative time periods and amounts of  
13          certain payments, an increase in weekly benefit  
14          amounts, and waiver of a waiting period for  
15          certain individuals for unemployment  
16          compensation purposes; providing an effective  
17          date.

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

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21           Section 1. The Legislature finds that businesses and  
22 individuals in this state are experiencing significant  
23 economic hardship and that revenues critical to the delivery  
24 of vital public services are jeopardized. Therefore, it is the  
25 intent of the Legislature to establish policies designed to  
26 stimulate economic activity in this state and promote the  
27 economic security of the residents of this state. The need to  
28 retain and create jobs in this state in the current economic  
29 environment is great. A significant investment of state funds  
30 in reemployment and retraining programs is essential to  
31 economic recovery in this state. The state should invest in

1 economic-recovery training programs that deliver a high  
2 expectation of continued employment after a reasonably short  
3 period of training is completed. Economic-recovery training  
4 funds should be expended on programs that enhance the skills  
5 of residents of this state who are employed by businesses  
6 based in this state.

7 Section 2. Economic-recovery training shall be awarded  
8 to providers of training services on a competitive-bid basis  
9 and shall receive continued support on a performance-based  
10 schedule not to exceed 12 months. Training agreements may not  
11 be continued with employers who demonstrate a pattern of  
12 failing to provide participants with employment. The Agency  
13 for Workforce Innovation and its controlling board, Workforce  
14 Florida, Inc., shall have power and authority over the use of  
15 economic-recovery training funds pursuant to this act and such  
16 funds shall be expended in accordance with the provisions of  
17 chapter 445, Florida Statutes.

18 Section 3. Subsection (7) of section 443.036, Florida  
19 Statutes, is amended to read:

20 443.036 Definitions.--As used in this chapter, unless  
21 the context clearly requires otherwise:

22 (7) BASE PERIOD.--

23 (a) "Base period" means the first four of the last  
24 five completed calendar quarters immediately preceding the  
25 first day of an individual's benefit year.

26 (b) With respect to a benefit year commencing after  
27 October 1, 2003, if an individual is not monetarily eligible  
28 in his or her base period to qualify for benefits, the Agency  
29 for Workforce Innovation must designate his or her base period  
30 to be the alternative base period. As used in this paragraph,  
31 the term "alternative base period" means the last four

1 completed calendar quarters immediately preceding the  
2 individual's benefit year. Wages used in a base period to  
3 establish a monetarily eligible benefit year may not be  
4 applied to establish monetary eligibility in any succeeding  
5 benefit year. If information regarding wages for the calendar  
6 quarter or quarters immediately preceding the benefit year has  
7 not been input into the agency's database, the agency shall  
8 request such information from the employer. An employer must  
9 respond to the wage request within 10 days after receiving a  
10 request from the agency. If the employer fails to provide the  
11 requested wage information within the required time, the  
12 employer is subject to the penalty for delinquent reports  
13 provided in s. 443.141(1)(b).

14 (c) For monetary determinations based upon the  
15 alternative base period under paragraph (b), if the agency is  
16 unable to access the wage information through its database,  
17 the agency may base the determination of eligibility for  
18 benefits on an affidavit submitted by the individual with  
19 respect to wages for those calendar quarters. The individual  
20 must furnish payroll information, if available, in support of  
21 the affidavit. A determination of benefits based upon an  
22 alternative base period shall be adjusted when the quarterly  
23 report of wage information from the employer is received, if  
24 that information causes a change in the determination.

25 Section 4. (1) Notwithstanding section 443.091(1)(e),  
26 Florida Statutes, the waiting period of 1 week shall be waived  
27 for unemployed individuals eligible to receive benefits.

28 (2) Notwithstanding section 443.111(1), Florida  
29 Statutes, the initial payment of unemployment compensation  
30 benefits shall be for 1 week of compensation and subsequent  
31 compensation shall occur biweekly.

1           (3) Notwithstanding section 443.111(3), Florida  
2 Statutes, the weekly benefit amount for any individual shall  
3 be increased by the greater of \$25 or 15 percent.

4           (4) This section expires June 30, 2005.

5           Section 5. This act shall take effect July 1, 2003.

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8                                       SENATE SUMMARY

9           Provides legislative intent for economic-recovery  
10           measures. Provides criteria, requirements, and  
11           limitations for economic-recovery training. Provides for  
12           use of an alternative base period whenever an individual  
13           is not monetarily eligible in a base period to receive  
14           unemployment compensation benefits. Specifies alternative  
15           time periods and amounts of payments of unemployment  
16           compensation, an increase in weekly benefit amounts for  
17           unemployment compensation purposes, and a waiver of a  
18           waiting period for unemployed individuals eligible to  
19           receive benefits. (See bill for details.)  
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