

1 A bill to be entitled
 2 An act relating to furloughed government employees;
 3 creating s. 110.1226, F.S.; providing a short title;
 4 providing legislative intent; providing definitions;
 5 providing a process for furloughed government
 6 employees to receive a moratorium on the repayment of
 7 debts for a specified time; prohibiting adverse credit
 8 reporting during the moratorium; requiring the
 9 Department of Economic Opportunity to adopt rules;
 10 providing for retroactivity; providing an effective
 11 date.

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 13 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:
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15 Section 1. Section 110.1226, Florida Statutes, is created
 16 to read:

17 110.1226 Florida emergency moratorium on repayment of
 18 debts for furloughed employees.-

19 (1) SHORT TITLE.-This act may be cited as the "Florida
 20 Emergency Moratorium on Repayment of Debts for Furloughed
 21 Employees Act."

22 (2) LEGISLATIVE INTENT.-It is the intent of the
 23 Legislature to support all local, state, and federal government
 24 employees living and working in the state, and if such
 25 government employees are furloughed or suspended from work

26 | because of a government closure or shutdown, the state will
 27 | assist those employees during the closure or shutdown and upon
 28 | the reopening of the government.

29 | (3) DEFINITIONS.—For purposes of this section, the term:

30 | (a) "Department" means the Department of Economic
 31 | Opportunity.

32 | (b) "Government employee" or "employee" means any person
 33 | employed by a local, state, or federal government agency or
 34 | entity.

35 | (4) EMERGENCY MORATORIUM.—

36 | (a) In the event of a local, state, or federal government
 37 | closure or shutdown, the agency or entity that is closed or shut
 38 | down shall notify, in writing, all affected government
 39 | employees. Upon notification, an affected government employee
 40 | may contact the department and request, in writing, assistance
 41 | from the department.

42 | (b) The department shall, upon verification that the
 43 | affected government employee is furloughed, provide such
 44 | employee a Letter to Creditors, which the employee must mail to
 45 | his or her creditors individually, requesting certain creditors,
 46 | including, but not limited to, utility companies, landlords, and
 47 | mortgage companies, to comply with the State of Florida
 48 | Emergency Moratorium on Repayment of Debts for Furloughed
 49 | Employees Act by stopping all collection of debts owed by the
 50 | affected government employee. The moratorium shall last no

51 longer than 6 months after the mailing date of the Letter to
52 Creditors.

53 (c) Any creditor that receives a Letter to Creditors may
54 not adversely report the government employee to a collection
55 agency or credit reporting bureau. A government employee's
56 credit worthiness may not be affected during the time the
57 employee is furloughed.

58 (d) Upon the reopening of the government agency or entity,
59 or the expiration of the 6-month period, whichever is sooner,
60 the moratorium is lifted and credit reporting may resume. The
61 affected government employee may request assistance from the
62 department to create a repayment plan unless the state decides
63 to pay, cancel, or suspend any or all of the employee's debt.

64 (5) The department shall adopt rules to implement this
65 section.

66 (6) This section applies to government employees
67 furloughed on or after December 22, 2018.

68 Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2019.