1	A bill to be entitled
2	An act relating to employment benefits and
3	accommodations for crime victims and witnesses;
4	amending s. 443.101, F.S.; revising factors for
5	exemptions from disqualification for employment
6	assistance benefits; providing documentation
7	requirements for such factors; providing definitions;
8	amending s. 443.131, F.S.; providing that reemployment
9	assistance benefits paid to employees as a result of
10	the additional factors may not be charged to the
11	employer's employment record; creating s. 448.046,
12	F.S.; providing definitions; requiring employers to
13	authorize employees to request and take up to a
14	specified number of days of leave from work under
15	certain circumstances; providing requirements and
16	purposes for such leave; providing applicability;
17	providing requirements for documentation for leave
18	requests; requiring employees to exhaust other leave
19	options before taking specified leave; authorizing
20	employers to require employees to take leave
21	concurrently; providing confidentiality requirements;
22	requiring employers to provide reasonable work
23	accommodations under certain circumstances; requiring
24	employees to disclose specified information and
25	provide specified documentation to request work

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26 accommodations; requiring employees to notify 27 employers when accommodations are no longer needed; 28 providing construction; requiring employers to 29 maintain the confidentiality of specified information; 30 prohibiting employers from engaging in specified actions under certain circumstances; providing 31 32 remedies for violations of specified provisions; authorizing employees to claim as damages all wages 33 and benefits under certain circumstances; providing an 34 35 exception; amending s. 741.313, F.S.; conforming 36 provisions to changes made by the act; providing an 37 effective date. 38 39 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida: 40 41 Section 1. Paragraph (a) of subsection (1) of section 42 443.101, Florida Statutes, is amended to read: 43 443.101 Disgualification for benefits.-An individual shall 44 be disgualified for benefits: 45 For the week in which he or she has voluntarily (1) (a) 46 left work without good cause attributable to his or her 47 employing unit or for the week in which he or she has been 48 discharged by the employing unit for misconduct connected with his or her work, based on a finding by the Department of 49 50 Economic Opportunity. As used in this paragraph, the term "work" Page 2 of 21

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51 means any work, whether full-time, part-time, or temporary.

52 Disgualification for voluntarily guitting continues for 1. 53 the full period of unemployment next ensuing after the 54 individual has left his or her full-time, part-time, or 55 temporary work voluntarily without good cause and until the 56 individual has earned income equal to or greater than 17 times 57 his or her weekly benefit amount. As used in this subsection, 58 the term "good cause" includes only that cause attributable to 59 the employing unit which would compel a reasonable employee to cease working or attributable to the individual's illness or 60 disability requiring separation from his or her work. Any other 61 62 disqualification may not be imposed.

63 2. An individual is not disqualified under this subsection64 for:

a. Voluntarily leaving temporary work to return
immediately when called to work by the permanent employing unit
that temporarily terminated his or her work within the previous
6 calendar months;

b. Voluntarily leaving work to relocate as a result of his
or her military-connected spouse's permanent change of station
orders, activation orders, or unit deployment orders; or

72 c. Voluntarily leaving work if he or she proves that his 73 or her discontinued employment is a direct result of 74 circumstances related to <u>stalking as described in s. 784.048(2)-</u> 75 (5) and (7), sexual violence as defined in s. 741.313(1), or

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76 domestic violence as defined in s. 741.28. An individual who 77 voluntarily leaves work under this sub-subparagraph must:

(I) Make reasonable efforts to preserve employment, unless the individual establishes that such remedies are likely to be futile or to increase the risk of future incidents of <u>stalking</u>, <u>sexual violence</u>, or domestic violence. Such efforts may include seeking a protective injunction, relocating to a secure place, or seeking reasonable accommodation from the employing unit, such as a transfer or change of assignment;

(II) Provide evidence such as an injunction, a protective
 order, medical records, mental health records, a law enforcement
 report, or other documentation authorized by state law which
 reasonably proves that domestic violence has occurred; and

89 (III) Reasonably believe that he or she is likely to be 90 the victim of a future act of stalking, sexual violence, or domestic violence at, in transit to, or departing from his or 91 92 her place of employment. An individual who is otherwise eligible 93 for benefits under this sub-subparagraph is ineligible for each 94 week that he or she no longer meets such criteria or refuses a 95 reasonable accommodation offered in good faith by his or her 96 employing unit.

97 <u>d.(I) If sub-subparagraph c. does not otherwise already</u>
98 apply, voluntarily leaving work if:

99 (A) He or she is a witness to a crime, his or her
100 immediate family member is a witness to a crime, or his or her

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101	immediate family member was a homicide victim; and
102	(B) His or her discontinued employment is a direct result
103	of circumstances related to the crime.
104	(II) An individual who voluntarily leaves work under this
105	sub-subparagraph must:
106	(A) Make reasonable efforts to preserve employment, unless
107	the individual establishes that such remedies are likely to be
108	futile or to increase the risk of future victimization. Such
109	efforts may include seeking a protective injunction, relocating
110	to a secure place, or seeking reasonable accommodation from the
111	employing unit, such as a transfer or change of assignment;
112	(B) Provide evidence such as an injunction, a protective
113	order, medical records, mental health records, a law enforcement
114	report, or other documentation authorized by state law which
115	reasonably verifies that a crime has occurred; and
116	(C) Reasonably believe that he or she is likely to be the
117	victim of a future crime at, in transit to, or departing from
118	his or her place of employment. An individual who is otherwise
119	eligible for benefits under this sub-subparagraph is ineligible
120	for each week that he or she no longer meets such criteria or
121	refuses a reasonable accommodation offered in good faith by his
122	or her employing unit.
123	3. The employment record of an employing unit may not be
124	charged for the payment of benefits to an individual who has
125	voluntarily left work under sub-subparagraph 2.c. <u>or sub-</u>
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126 subparagraph 2.d.

127 Disgualification for being discharged for misconduct 4. 128 connected with his or her work continues for the full period of 129 unemployment next ensuing after having been discharged and until 130 the individual is reemployed and has earned income of at least 131 17 times his or her weekly benefit amount and for not more than 132 52 weeks immediately following that week, as determined by the 133 department in each case according to the circumstances or the seriousness of the misconduct, under the department's rules for 134 determining disqualification for benefits for misconduct. 135

5. If an individual has provided notification to the employing unit of his or her intent to voluntarily leave work and the employing unit discharges the individual for reasons other than misconduct before the date the voluntary quit was to take effect, the individual, if otherwise entitled, shall receive benefits from the date of the employer's discharge until the effective date of his or her voluntary quit.

143 If an individual is notified by the employing unit of 6. 144 the employer's intent to discharge the individual for reasons 145 other than misconduct and the individual quits without good 146 cause before the date the discharge was to take effect, the claimant is ineligible for benefits pursuant to s. 443.091(1)(d) 147 for failing to be available for work for the week or weeks of 148 unemployment occurring before the effective date of the 149 150 discharge.

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151	7. As used in this paragraph, the term:
152	a. "Crime" means any of the following:
153	(I) Sexual violence as defined in s. 741.313(1).
154	(II) Domestic violence as defined in s. 741.28.
155	(III) Stalking as described in s. 784.048(2), (3), (4),
156	(5), or (7).
157	(IV) A crime that causes physical injury, psychological
158	injury with the threat of physical injury, or death to the
159	victim.
160	b. "Immediate family member" means any of the following:
161	(I) A parent, child, or sibling of an individual, whether
162	by blood, adoption, or marriage and regardless of the age of the
163	family member or individual.
164	(II) A legal guardian of an individual, a person who
165	stands in loco parentis to an individual, or a person who was a
166	legal guardian to an individual or who stood in loco parentis to
167	an individual when the individual was a minor.
168	(III) A person to whom an individual is a legal guardian,
169	to whom an individual stands in loco parentis, or to whom an
170	individual was a legal guardian or stood in loco parentis when
171	the person was a minor.
172	(IV) A spouse, fiancé, or fiancée of an individual.
173	(V) A person who lives in the same dwelling unit as an
174	individual and who has a relationship of a romantic or intimate
175	nature with the individual.

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176 (VI) A person who lives in the same dwelling unit as an 177 individual and who is related to the individual by blood, 178 adoption, or marriage, or a person who has at any time lived in 179 the same dwelling unit as an individual and whose close association with the individual is similar to that of a parent, 180 181 child, sibling, or spouse. 182 c. "Witness" means a person, including, but not limited 183 to, the victim, who witnessed any part of the commission of a 184 crime and who was neither the perpetrator nor an accomplice. 185 Section 2. Paragraph (a) of subsection (3) of section 443.131, Florida Statutes, is amended to read: 186 187 443.131 Contributions.-(3) VARIATION OF CONTRIBUTION RATES BASED ON BENEFIT 188 189 EXPERIENCE.-190 Employment records.-The regular and short-time (a) 191 compensation benefits paid to an eligible individual shall be 192 charged to the employment record of each employer who paid the 193 individual wages of at least \$100 during the individual's base 194 period in proportion to the total wages paid by all employers 195 who paid the individual wages during the individual's base 196 period. Benefits may not be charged to the employment record of 197 an employer who furnishes part-time work to an individual who, because of loss of employment with one or more other employers, 198 is eligible for partial benefits while being furnished part-time 199 work by the employer on substantially the same basis and in 200

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201 substantially the same amount as the individual's employment 202 during his or her base period, regardless of whether this part-203 time work is simultaneous or successive to the individual's lost employment. Further, as provided in s. 443.151(3), benefits may 204 205 not be charged to the employment record of an employer who 206 furnishes the Department of Economic Opportunity with notice, as 207 prescribed in rules of the department, that any of the following 208 apply:

1. If an individual leaves his or her work without good cause attributable to the employer or is discharged by the employer for misconduct connected with his or her work, benefits subsequently paid to the individual based on wages paid by the employer before the separation may not be charged to the employment record of the employer.

215 2. If an individual is discharged by the employer for unsatisfactory performance during an initial employment 216 217 probationary period, benefits subsequently paid to the 218 individual based on wages paid during the probationary period by 219 the employer before the separation may not be charged to the 220 employer's employment record. As used in this subparagraph, the 221 term "initial employment probationary period" means an 222 established probationary plan that applies to all employees or a specific group of employees and that does not exceed 90 calendar 223 224 days following the first day a new employee begins work. The 225 employee must be informed of the probationary period within the

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first 7 days of work. The employer must demonstrate by conclusive evidence that the individual was separated because of unsatisfactory work performance and not because of lack of work due to temporary, seasonal, casual, or other similar employment that is not of a regular, permanent, and year-round nature.

231 Benefits subsequently paid to an individual after his 3. 232 or her refusal without good cause to accept suitable work from 233 an employer may not be charged to the employment record of the 234 employer if any part of those benefits are based on wages paid by the employer before the individual's refusal to accept 235 236 suitable work. As used in this subparagraph, the term "good 237 cause" does not include distance to employment caused by a 238 change of residence by the individual. The department shall 239 adopt rules prescribing for the payment of all benefits whether 240 this subparagraph applies regardless of whether a 241 disqualification under s. 443.101 applies to the claim.

4. If an individual is separated from work as a direct
result of a natural disaster declared under the Robert T.
Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, 42 U.S.C.
ss. 5121 et seq., benefits subsequently paid to the individual
based on wages paid by the employer before the separation may
not be charged to the employment record of the employer.

5. If an individual is separated from work as a direct result of an oil spill, terrorist attack, or other similar disaster of national significance not subject to a declaration

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251	under the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency
252	Assistance Act, benefits subsequently paid to the individual
253	based on wages paid by the employer before the separation may
254	not be charged to the employment record of the employer.
255	6. If an individual is separated from work as a direct
256	result of stalking, sexual violence, domestic violence, or a
257	crime and meets all requirements in s. 443.101(1)(a)2.c. or
258	2.d., benefits subsequently paid to the individual based on
259	wages paid by the employer before separation may not be charged
260	to the employment record of the employer.
261	Section 3. Section 448.046, Florida Statutes, is created
262	to read:
263	448.046 Leave and work accommodations for victims or
264	witnesses of crime
265	(1) As used in this section, the term:
266	(a) "Crime" means any of the following:
267	1. Sexual violence.
268	2. Domestic violence.
269	3. A crime that causes physical injury, psychological
270	injury with the threat of physical injury, or death to the
271	victim.
272	(b) "Domestic violence" means domestic violence, as
273	defined in s. 741.28; stalking, as described in s. 748.048(2),
274	(3), (4), (5), or (7); or any crime the underlying factual basis
275	of which has been found by a court to include an act of domestic

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276	violence or stalking.
277	(c) "Employee" has the same meaning as in s. 440.02(15).
278	(d) "Employer" has the same meaning as in s. 440.02(16).
279	(e) "Immediate family member" means any of the following:
280	1. A parent, child, or sibling of the employee, whether by
281	blood, adoption, or marriage and regardless of the age of the
282	family member or employee.
283	2. A legal guardian of the employee, a person who stands
284	in loco parentis to the employee, or a person who was a legal
285	guardian to the employee or who stood in loco parentis to the
286	employee when the employee was a minor.
287	3. A person to whom the employee is a legal guardian, to
288	whom the employee stands in loco parentis, or to whom the
289	employee was a legal guardian or stood in loco parentis when the
290	person was a minor.
291	4. A spouse, fiancé, or fiancée of the employee.
292	5. A cohabitant who lives in the same dwelling unit as the
293	employee and who has a relationship of a romantic or intimate
294	nature with the employee.
295	6. A person who lives in the same dwelling unit as the
296	employee and who is related to the employee by blood, adoption,
297	or marriage, or a person who has at any time lived in the same
298	dwelling unit as the employee and whose close association with
299	the employee is similar to that of a parent, child, sibling, or
300	spouse.

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"Sexual violence" has the same meaning as in s. 301 (f) 302 741.313. 303 "Witness" means a person, including, but not limited (g) 304 to, the victim, who witnessed any part of the commission of a 305 crime and who was neither the perpetrator nor an accomplice. 306 (2) (a) An employer shall authorize an employee who is not 307 otherwise already eligible for leave under s. 741.313 to request 308 and take up to 30 working days of leave from work in any 12-309 month period if the employee or an immediate family member of 310 the employee is a witness to a crime in that 12-month period, or 311 if an immediate family member of the employee is a homicide 312 victim in that period. This leave may be with or without pay, at 313 the discretion of the employer. 314 This section applies if an employee uses the leave (b) 315 from work as a result of the crime to: 316 1. Seek an injunction for protection against domestic 317 violence or an injunction for protection in cases of repeat 318 violence, domestic violence, dating violence, or sexual 319 violence; 320 2. Seek a temporary restraining order, protective order, 321 or other injunction for protection; 322 3. Obtain medical care or mental health counseling, or both, for the employee or an immediate family member of the 323 324 employee to address physical or psychological injuries resulting 325 from the crime;

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326	4. Obtain services from a victim services organization,
327	including, but not limited to, a domestic violence shelter or
328	program or a rape crisis center as a result of the crime;
329	5. Make the employee's home secure, or seek new housing,
330	to improve the employee's safety or psychological well-being or
331	the employee's immediate family member's safety or psychological
332	well-being;
333	6. Seek legal assistance in addressing issues arising from
334	the crime, or attend and prepare for court-related proceedings
335	arising from the crime;
336	7. Make arrangements necessitated by the death of an
337	employee's immediate family member as a result of the crime;
338	8. Grieve the death of an employee's immediate family
339	
	member as a result of the crime; or
340	9. Make any other arrangements necessary to provide for
341	the safety or psychological well-being of the employee or his or
342	her immediate family member as a result of the crime.
343	(3) This section applies to an employer who employs 25 or
344	more employees and to an employee who has been employed by the
345	employer for 3 or more months.
346	(4)(a) Except in cases of imminent danger to the health or
347	safety of the employee, or to the health or safety of an
348	immediate family member of the employee, an employee seeking
349	leave from work under this section must provide to his or her
350	employer appropriate advance notice of the leave as required by
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351	the employer's policy along with sufficient documentation of the
352	crime as required by the employer. The employer must accept any
353	of the following as sufficient documentation of the crime:
354	1. A copy of an injunction for protection issued to the
355	employee or the employee's immediate family member;
356	2. A copy of an order of no contact entered by the court
357	in a criminal case in which the defendant was charged with
358	committing a crime against the employee or the employee's
359	immediate family member, or to which the employee or employee's
360	immediate family member was otherwise a witness;
361	3. A written certification from a domestic violence center
362	certified under chapter 39 or a rape crisis center as defined in
363	s. 794.055(2) that states that the employee or the employee's
364	immediate family member was a witness to a crime, or that the
365	employee's immediate family member was a homicide victim;
366	4. A written certification from a public or nonprofit
367	agency or program that receives moneys administered by the
368	Office of the Attorney General to provide services to victims of
369	or witnesses to a crime, that states that the employee or
370	employee's immediate family member was a witness to a crime or
371	that the employee's immediate family member was a homicide
372	victim;
373	5. A copy of a law enforcement report documenting the
374	crime and identifying the employee or the employee's immediate
375	family member as a witness to a crime, or identifying the
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376	employee's immediate family member as a homicide victim;
377	6. A written statement from a marriage and family
378	therapist as defined in s. 394.455, mental health counselor as
379	defined in s. 394.455, physician as defined in s. 458.305,
380	physician assistant as defined in s. 394.455, psychiatric nurse
381	as defined in s. 394.455, psychiatrist as defined in s. 394.455,
382	or other health care practitioner as defined under s. 456.001
383	certifying that the employee or the employee's immediate family
384	member is receiving or has received treatment as a result of
385	being a witness to a crime, as a result of the employee's
386	immediate family member being a witness to a crime, or as a
387	result of the death of an employee's immediate family member as
388	a result of homicide; or
389	7. Any other documentation that is:
390	a. Sufficient to reasonably verify that the crime
391	occurred;
392	b. Authorized by state law; or
393	c. Acceptable to the employer.
394	(b) An employee seeking leave under this subsection must,
395	before receiving the leave, exhaust all annual or vacation
396	leave, personal leave, and sick leave, if applicable, that is
397	available to the employee, unless the employer waives this
398	requirement.
399	(c) An employer may require the employee to take leave
400	allowable under this section concurrently with any annual
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401	vacation leave, personal leave, and sick leave, if applicable,
402	that is available to the employee.
403	(d) To the extent allowed by law, an employer must
404	maintain the confidentiality of all information relating to a
405	request for leave made by an employee under this subsection.
406	(5)(a) An employer must provide reasonable work
407	accommodations if requested by an employee who:
408	1. Is a witness to a crime;
409	2. Has an immediate family member who is a witness to a
410	crime; or
411	3. Has an immediate family member who is deceased as a
412	result of a homicide.
413	(b) For the purposes of this subsection, reasonable
414	accommodations may include, but are not limited to, the
415	implementation of safety measures, including a transfer,
416	reassignment, modified schedule, changed work telephone number,
417	changed work station, installed lock, assistance in documenting
418	crime that occurs in the workplace, an implemented safety
419	procedure, or another reasonable adjustment to a job structure,
420	workplace facility, or work requirement.
421	(c) An employer is not required to provide a reasonable
422	accommodation to an employee who has not disclosed his or her
423	status as a witness to a crime, as a person with an immediate
424	family member who is a witness to a crime, or as a person who
425	has an immediate family member who is deceased as a result of a

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426 homicide.

427	(d) An employer must engage in a timely, good faith, and
428	interactive process with the employee to determine effective
429	reasonable accommodations.
430	(e) In determining whether the accommodation is
431	reasonable, an employer shall consider any exigent circumstance
432	or danger facing the employee.
433	(f) An employee seeking reasonable accommodations under
434	this subsection must provide to his or her employer sufficient
435	documentation of the crime if requested by the employer. The
436	employer must accept any of the items listed in paragraph (4)(a)
437	as sufficient documentation.
438	(g)1. If circumstances change and an employee needs a new
439	accommodation, the employee shall request a new accommodation
440	from the employer.
441	2. Upon receiving the request, the employer shall engage
442	in a timely, good faith, and interactive process with the
443	employee to determine effective reasonable accommodations.
444	(h) If an employee no longer needs an accommodation, the
445	employee shall notify the employer that the accommodation is no
446	longer needed.
447	(i) This subsection does not require the employer to
448	undertake an action that constitutes an undue hardship on the
449	employer's business operations.
450	(j) To the extent allowed by law, an employer must

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451 maintain the confidentiality of all information relating to a 452 request for reasonable accommodations made by an employee under 453 this subsection. 454 (6) (a) An employer may not interfere with, restrain, or 455 deny the exercise of or any attempt by an employee to exercise 456 any right provided under this section. 457 (b) An employer may not discharge, demote, suspend, 458 retaliate, or in any other manner discriminate against an 459 employee for exercising his or her rights under this section 460 through a request for leave or for reasonable accommodations, 461 regardless of whether the request is granted. 462 (c) An employee has no greater rights to continued 463 employment or to other benefits and conditions of employment 464 than if the employee was not entitled to leave or reasonable 465 accommodations under this section. This section does not limit 466 the employer's right to discipline or terminate any employee for 467 any reason, including, but not limited to, reductions in work 468 force or termination for cause or for no reason at all, other 469 than exercising his or her rights under this section. 470 (7) Notwithstanding any other law to the contrary, the 471 sole remedy for any person claiming to be aggrieved by a 472 violation of this section is to bring a civil suit for damages or equitable relief, or both, in circuit court. The person may 473 474 claim as damages all wages and benefits that would have been due 475 the person up to and including the date of the judgment had the

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476 act violating this section not occurred, but the person may not 477 claim wages or benefits for a period of leave granted without 478 pay as provided in paragraph (2)(a). However, this section does 479 not relieve the person from the obligation to mitigate his or 480 her damages. 481 Section 4. Subsections (2) and (3) of section 741.313, 482 Florida Statutes, are amended to read: 483 741.313 Unlawful action against employees seeking 484 protection.-485 (2) (a) An employer shall permit an employee to request and 486 take up to 30 $\frac{3}{2}$ working days of leave from work in any 12-month 487 period if the employee or a family or household member of an 488 employee is the victim of domestic violence or sexual violence. 489 This leave may be with or without pay, at the discretion of the 490 employer. 491 This section applies if an employee uses the leave (b) 492 from work to: Seek an injunction for protection against domestic 493 1. 494 violence or an injunction for protection in cases of repeat 495 violence, domestic violence, dating violence, or sexual 496 violence; 497 2. Obtain medical care or mental health counseling, or both, for the employee or a family or household member to 498 address physical or psychological injuries resulting from the 499 act of domestic violence or sexual violence; 500

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501 Obtain services from a victim services organization, 3. 502 including, but not limited to, a domestic violence shelter or 503 program or a rape crisis center as a result of the act of 504 domestic violence or sexual violence; 505 4. Make the employee's home secure from the perpetrator of 506 the domestic violence or sexual violence or to seek new housing to improve the employee's or a family or household member's 507 508 safety or psychological well-being escape the perpetrator; or 509 Seek legal assistance in addressing issues arising from 5. the act of domestic violence or sexual violence or to attend and 510 511 prepare for court or court-related proceedings arising from the 512 act of domestic violence or sexual violence; -513 6. Seek a temporary restraining order, protective order, 514 or other injunction for protection; or 515 7. Make any other arrangements necessary to provide for 516 the safety or psychological well-being of the employee or a 517 family or household member following the act of domestic 518 violence or sexual violence. 519 This section applies to an employer who employs 25 $\frac{50}{50}$ (3) 520 or more employees and to an employee who has been employed by 521 the employer for 3 or more months. 522 Section 5. This act shall take effect July 1, 2021.

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