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LEGISLATIVE ACTION

Senate	.	House
Comm: UNFAV	.	
03/30/2021	.	
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The Committee on Commerce and Tourism (Powell) recommended the following:

Senate Amendment (with title amendment)

Delete lines 15 - 37
and insert:
Section 1. Present subsections (3) through (46) of section 443.036, Florida Statutes, are redesignated as subsections (4) through (47), respectively, a new subsection (3) is added to that section, and present subsection (24) of that section is amended, to read:
443.036 Definitions.—As used in this chapter, the term:

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(3) "Alternative base period" means the four most recently completed calendar quarters before an individual's benefit year, if such quarters qualify the individual for benefits and were not previously used to establish a prior valid benefit year.

(25) ~~(24)~~ "High quarter" means the quarter in an individual's base period, or in the individual's alternative base period if an alternative base period is used for determining benefits eligibility, in which the individual has the greatest amount of wages paid, regardless of the number of employers paying wages in that quarter.

Section 2. Paragraph (g) of subsection (1) of section 443.091, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

443.091 Benefit eligibility conditions.—

(1) An unemployed individual is eligible to receive benefits for any week only if the Department of Economic Opportunity finds that:

(g) She or he has been paid wages for insured work equal to 1.5 times her or his high quarter wages during her or his base period, except that an unemployed individual is not eligible to receive benefits if the base period wages are less than $3,400. If an unemployed individual is ineligible for benefits based on base period wages, his or her wages shall be calculated using the alternative base period, and his or her claim shall be established using such wages.

Section 3. Subsections (2) and (3) and paragraph (b) of subsection (5) of section 443.111, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

443.111 Payment of benefits.—

(2) QUALIFYING REQUIREMENTS.—


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(a) To establish a benefit year for reemployment assistance benefits, an individual must have:

1.~~(a)~~ Wage credits in two or more calendar quarters of the individual's base period or alternative base period.

2.~~(b)~~ Minimum total base period wage credits equal to the high quarter wages multiplied by 1.5, but at least $3,400 in the base period, or in the alternative base period if the alternative base period is used for benefits eligibility.

(b)1. If a worker is ineligible for benefits based on base period wages, wages for that worker must be calculated using an alternative base period and the claim shall be established using such wages.

2. If the wage information for an individual's most recently completed calendar quarter is unavailable to the department from regular quarterly reports of systematically accessible wage information, the department must promptly contact the individual's employer to obtain the wage information.

3. Wages that fall within the alternative base period of claims established under this paragraph are not available for reuse in qualifying for any subsequent benefit years.

4. The department shall adopt rules to administer this paragraph.

(3) WEEKLY BENEFIT AMOUNT.—

(a) An individual's "weekly benefit amount" is an amount equal to one twenty-sixth of the total wages for insured work paid during that quarter of the base period in which the total wages paid were the highest, but not less than $100 ~~$32~~ or more than $375 ~~$275~~. The weekly benefit amount, if not a multiple of

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$1, is rounded downward to the nearest full dollar amount. The maximum weekly benefit amount in effect at the time the claimant establishes an individual weekly benefit amount is the maximum benefit amount applicable throughout the claimant's benefit year.

(b) The weekly benefit amount shall be based on either the claimant's base period wages or alternative base period wages, whichever period results in the greater benefit amount.

(5) DURATION OF BENEFITS.—

(b) Each otherwise eligible individual is entitled during any benefit year to a total amount of benefits equal to 25 percent of the total wages in his or her base period, not to exceed $8,625 ~~$6,325~~ or the product arrived at by multiplying the weekly benefit amount with the number of weeks determined in paragraph (c), whichever is less. However, the total amount of benefits, if not a multiple of $1, is rounded downward to the nearest full dollar amount. These benefits are payable at a weekly rate no greater than the weekly benefit amount.

Section 4. Paragraph (a) of subsection (4) of section 215.425, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

215.425 Extra compensation claims prohibited; bonuses; severance pay.—

(4)(a) On or after July 1, 2011, a unit of government that enters into a contract or employment agreement, or renewal or renegotiation of an existing contract or employment agreement, that contains a provision for severance pay with an officer, agent, employee, or contractor must include the following provisions in the contract:

1. A requirement that severance pay provided may not exceed

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an amount greater than 20 weeks of compensation.

2. A prohibition of provision of severance pay when the officer, agent, employee, or contractor has been fired for misconduct, as defined in s. 443.036(30) ~~s. 443.036(29)~~, by the unit of government.

Section 5. Paragraph (a) of subsection (1) and paragraph (f) of subsection (13) of section 443.1216, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

443.1216 Employment.—Employment, as defined in s. 443.036, is subject to this chapter under the following conditions:

(1)(a) The employment subject to this chapter includes a service performed, including a service performed in interstate commerce, by:

1. An officer of a corporation.

2. An individual who, under the usual common-law rules applicable in determining the employer-employee relationship, is an employee. However, whenever a client, as defined in s. 443.036(19) ~~s. 443.036(18)~~, which would otherwise be designated as an employing unit has contracted with an employee leasing company to supply it with workers, those workers are considered employees of the employee leasing company. An employee leasing company may lease corporate officers of the client to the client and other workers to the client, except as prohibited by regulations of the Internal Revenue Service. Employees of an employee leasing company must be reported under the employee leasing company’s tax identification number and contribution rate for work performed for the employee leasing company.

a. However, except for the internal employees of an employee leasing company, each employee leasing company may make

a separate one-time election to report and pay contributions under the tax identification number and contribution rate for each client of the employee leasing company. Under the client method, an employee leasing company choosing this option must assign leased employees to the client company that is leasing the employees. The client method is solely a method to report and pay unemployment contributions, and, whichever method is chosen, such election may not impact any other aspect of state law. An employee leasing company that elects the client method must pay contributions at the rates assigned to each client company.

(I) The election applies to all of the employee leasing company's current and future clients.

(II) The employee leasing company must notify the Department of Revenue of its election by July 1, 2012, and such election applies to reports and contributions for the first quarter of the following calendar year. The notification must include:

(A) A list of each client company and the unemployment account number or, if one has not yet been issued, the federal employment identification number, as established by the employee leasing company upon the election to file by client method;

(B) A list of each client company's current and previous employees and their respective social security numbers for the prior 3 state fiscal years or, if the client company has not been a client for the prior 3 state fiscal years, such portion of the prior 3 state fiscal years that the client company has been a client must be supplied;

(C) The wage data and benefit charges associated with each

client company for the prior 3 state fiscal years or, if the client company has not been a client for the prior 3 state fiscal years, such portion of the prior 3 state fiscal years that the client company has been a client must be supplied. If the client company's employment record is chargeable with benefits for less than 8 calendar quarters while being a client of the employee leasing company, the client company must pay contributions at the initial rate of 2.7 percent; and

(D) The wage data and benefit charges for the prior 3 state fiscal years that cannot be associated with a client company must be reported and charged to the employee leasing company.

(III) Subsequent to choosing the client method, the employee leasing company may not change its reporting method.

(IV) The employee leasing company shall file a Florida Department of Revenue Employer's Quarterly Report for each client company by approved electronic means, and pay all contributions by approved electronic means.

(V) For the purposes of calculating experience rates when the client method is chosen, each client's own benefit charges and wage data experience while with the employee leasing company determines each client's tax rate where the client has been a client of the employee leasing company for at least 8 calendar quarters before the election. The client company shall continue to report the nonleased employees under its tax rate.

(VI) The election is binding on each client of the employee leasing company for as long as a written agreement is in effect between the client and the employee leasing company pursuant to s. 468.525(3)(a). If the relationship between the employee leasing company and the client terminates, the client retains

the wage and benefit history experienced under the employee leasing company.

(VII) Notwithstanding which election method the employee leasing company chooses, the applicable client company is an employing unit for purposes of s. 443.071. The employee leasing company or any of its officers or agents are liable for any violation of s. 443.071 engaged in by such persons or entities. The applicable client company or any of its officers or agents are liable for any violation of s. 443.071 engaged in by such persons or entities. The employee leasing company or its applicable client company is not liable for any violation of s. 443.071 engaged in by the other party or by the other party's officers or agents.

(VIII) If an employee leasing company fails to select the client method of reporting not later than July 1, 2012, the entity is required to report under the employee leasing company's tax identification number and contribution rate.

(IX) After an employee leasing company is licensed pursuant to part XI of chapter 468, each newly licensed entity has 30 days after the date the license is granted to notify the tax collection service provider in writing of their selection of the client method. A newly licensed employee leasing company that fails to timely select reporting pursuant to the client method of reporting must report under the employee leasing company's tax identification number and contribution rate.

(X) Irrespective of the election, each transfer of trade or business, including workforce, or a portion thereof, between employee leasing companies is subject to the provisions of s. 443.131(3)(g) if, at the time of the transfer, there is common

ownership, management, or control between the entities.

b. In addition to any other report required to be filed by law, an employee leasing company shall submit a report to the Labor Market Statistics Center within the Department of Economic Opportunity which includes each client establishment and each establishment of the leasing company, or as otherwise directed by the department. The report must include the following information for each establishment:

(I) The trade or establishment name;

(II) The former reemployment assistance account number, if available;

(III) The former federal employer’s identification number, if available;

(IV) The industry code recognized and published by the United States Office of Management and Budget, if available;

(V) A description of the client’s primary business activity in order to verify or assign an industry code;

(VI) The address of the physical location;

(VII) The number of full-time and part-time employees who worked during, or received pay that was subject to reemployment assistance taxes for, the pay period including the 12th of the month for each month of the quarter;

(VIII) The total wages subject to reemployment assistance taxes paid during the calendar quarter;

(IX) An internal identification code to uniquely identify each establishment of each client;

(X) The month and year that the client entered into the contract for services; and

(XI) The month and year that the client terminated the

contract for services.

c. The report must be submitted electronically or in a manner otherwise prescribed by the Department of Economic Opportunity in the format specified by the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the United States Department of Labor for its Multiple Worksite Report for Professional Employer Organizations. The report must be provided quarterly to the Labor Market Statistics Center within the department, or as otherwise directed by the department, and must be filed by the last day of the month immediately after the end of the calendar quarter. The information required in sub-sub-subparagraphs b.(X) and (XI) need be provided only in the quarter in which the contract to which it relates was entered into or terminated. The sum of the employment data and the sum of the wage data in this report must match the employment and wages reported in the reemployment assistance quarterly tax and wage report.

d. The department shall adopt rules as necessary to administer this subparagraph, and may administer, collect, enforce, and waive the penalty imposed by s. 443.141(1)(b) for the report required by this subparagraph.

e. For the purposes of this subparagraph, the term "establishment" means any location where business is conducted or where services or industrial operations are performed.

3. An individual other than an individual who is an employee under subparagraph 1. or subparagraph 2., who performs services for remuneration for any person:

a. As an agent-driver or commission-driver engaged in distributing meat products, vegetable products, fruit products, bakery products, beverages other than milk, or laundry or

drycleaning services for his or her principal.

b. As a traveling or city salesperson engaged on a full-time basis in the solicitation on behalf of, and the transmission to, his or her principal of orders from wholesalers, retailers, contractors, or operators of hotels, restaurants, or other similar establishments for merchandise for resale or supplies for use in the business operations. This sub-subparagraph does not apply to an agent-driver or a commission-driver and does not apply to sideline sales activities performed on behalf of a person other than the salesperson's principal.

4. The services described in subparagraph 3. are employment subject to this chapter only if:

a. The contract of service contemplates that substantially all of the services are to be performed personally by the individual;

b. The individual does not have a substantial investment in facilities used in connection with the services, other than facilities used for transportation; and

c. The services are not in the nature of a single transaction that is not part of a continuing relationship with the person for whom the services are performed.

(13) The following are exempt from coverage under this chapter:

(f) Service performed in the employ of a public employer as defined in s. 443.036, except as provided in subsection (2), and service performed in the employ of an instrumentality of a public employer as described in s. 443.036(36)(b) or (c) ~~s. 443.036(35)(b) or (c)~~, to the extent that the instrumentality is immune under the United States Constitution from the tax imposed

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by s. 3301 of the Internal Revenue Code for that service.

Section 6. Paragraph (f) of subsection (3) of section 443.131, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

443.131 Contributions.—

(3) VARIATION OF CONTRIBUTION RATES BASED ON BENEFIT EXPERIENCE.—

(f) *Transfer of employment records.*—

1. For the purposes of this subsection, two or more employers who are parties to a transfer of business or the subject of a merger, consolidation, or other form of reorganization, effecting a change in legal identity or form, are deemed a single employer and are considered to be one employer with a continuous employment record if the tax collection service provider finds that the successor employer continues to carry on the employing enterprises of all of the predecessor employers and that the successor employer has paid all contributions required of and due from all of the predecessor employers and has assumed liability for all contributions that may become due from all of the predecessor employers. In addition, an employer may not be considered a successor under this subparagraph if the employer purchases a company with a lower rate into which employees with job functions unrelated to the business endeavors of the predecessor are transferred for the purpose of acquiring the low rate and avoiding payment of contributions. As used in this paragraph, notwithstanding s. 443.036(15) ~~s. 443.036(14)~~, the term "contributions" means all indebtedness to the tax collection service provider, including, but not limited to, interest, penalty, collection fee, and service fee. A successor employer

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must accept the transfer of all of the predecessor employers' employment records within 30 days after the date of the official notification of liability by succession. If a predecessor employer has unpaid contributions or outstanding quarterly reports, the successor employer must pay the total amount with certified funds within 30 days after the date of the notice listing the total amount due. After the total indebtedness is paid, the tax collection service provider shall transfer the employment records of all of the predecessor employers to the successor employer's employment record. The tax collection service provider shall determine the contribution rate of the combined successor and predecessor employers upon the transfer of the employment records, as prescribed by rule, in order to calculate any change in the contribution rate resulting from the transfer of the employment records.

2. Regardless of whether a predecessor employer's employment record is transferred to a successor employer under this paragraph, the tax collection service provider shall treat the predecessor employer, if he or she subsequently employs individuals, as an employer without a previous employment record or, if his or her coverage is terminated under s. 443.121, as a new employing unit.

3. The state agency providing reemployment assistance tax collection services may adopt rules governing the partial transfer of experience rating when an employer transfers an identifiable and segregable portion of his or her payrolls and business to a successor employing unit. As a condition of each partial transfer, these rules must require the following to be filed with the tax collection service provider: an application

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by the successor employing unit, an agreement by the predecessor employer, and the evidence required by the tax collection service provider to show the benefit experience and payrolls attributable to the transferred portion through the date of the transfer. These rules must provide that the successor employing unit, if not an employer subject to this chapter, becomes an employer as of the date of the transfer and that the transferred portion of the predecessor employer's employment record is removed from the employment record of the predecessor employer. For each calendar year after the date of the transfer of the employment record in the records of the tax collection service provider, the service provider shall compute the contribution rate payable by the successor employer or employing unit based on his or her employment record, combined with the transferred portion of the predecessor employer's employment record. These rules may also prescribe what contribution rates are payable by the predecessor and successor employers for the period between the date of the transfer of the transferred portion of the predecessor employer's employment record in the records of the tax collection service provider and the first day of the next calendar year.

4. This paragraph does not apply to an employee leasing company and client contractual agreement as defined in s. 443.036, except as provided in s. 443.1216(1)(a)2.a. The tax collection service provider shall, if the contractual agreement is terminated or the employee leasing company fails to submit reports or pay contributions as required by the service provider, treat the client as a new employer without previous employment record unless the client is otherwise eligible for a

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variation from the standard rate.

========== T I T L E A M E N D M E N T ==========

And the title is amended as follows:

Delete lines 3 - 6

and insert:

s. 443.036, F.S.; defining and revising terms for purposes of the Reemployment Assistance Program Law; amending s. 443.091, F.S.; revising conditions under which an individual may qualify for reemployment assistance benefits; amending s. 443.111, F.S.; requiring an alternative base period to be used under certain circumstances when calculating wages in determining qualification for reemployment assistance benefits; requiring the Department of Economic Opportunity to contact an individual’s employer if certain wage information is unavailable through specified means; specifying that wages that fall within an alternative base period are not available for reuse in subsequent benefit years; requiring the department to adopt rules; increasing the weekly benefit amounts an individual may receive; providing that weekly benefit amounts be determined based on the greater of the base period or alternative base period; increasing the cap on the total benefit amount an individual is entitled to receive during a benefit year; amending ss. 215.425, 443.1216, and 443.131, F.S.; conforming cross-references; reenacting ss.