

1 A bill to be entitled
 2 An act relating to verification of reemployment
 3 assistance benefit eligibility; providing a short
 4 title; amending s. 443.101, F.S.; revising
 5 circumstances under which the Department of Commerce
 6 disqualifies claimants from reemployment assistance
 7 benefits; creating s. 443.1112, F.S.; requiring the
 8 department to verify claimants' identities before
 9 paying benefits; requiring the department to cross-
 10 check certain information; providing duties of the
 11 department; requiring the department to maintain a web
 12 page for a specified purpose and to notify employers
 13 each year of the web page; providing annual reporting
 14 requirements; providing an effective date.

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

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 18 **Section 1.** This act may be cited as the "Promoting Work,
 19 Deterring Fraud Act of 2025."

20 **Section 2. Subsection (2) of section 443.101, Florida**
 21 **Statutes, is amended to read:**

22 443.101 Disqualification for benefits.—An individual shall
 23 be disqualified for benefits:

24 (2) If the Department of Commerce finds that the
 25 individual has failed without good cause to apply for available

26 | suitable work, including contacting the required number of
27 | prospective employers per week for any week of unemployment
28 | claimed in the benefit year in accordance with s. 443.091, or
29 | failed to appear on three or more occasions for a scheduled job
30 | interview without notifying the prospective employer of the need
31 | to cancel or reschedule the interview, to accept suitable work
32 | when offered to him or her, to ~~or~~ return to the individual's
33 | customary self-employment when directed by the department, or to
34 | return to employment when recalled to work by the individual's
35 | employer after a temporary layoff, the disqualification
36 | continues for the full period of unemployment next ensuing after
37 | he or she failed without good cause to apply for available
38 | suitable work, accept suitable work, or return to his or her
39 | customary employment or self-employment, and until the
40 | individual has earned income of at least 17 times his or her
41 | weekly benefit amount. The department shall by rule adopt
42 | criteria to implement this subsection, including for determining
43 | the "suitability of work," as used in this section. In
44 | developing these rules, the department shall consider the
45 | duration of a claimant's unemployment in determining the
46 | suitability of work and the suitability of proposed rates of
47 | compensation for available work. Further, after an individual
48 | has received 25 weeks of benefits in a single year, suitable
49 | work is a job that pays the minimum wage and is 120 percent or
50 | more of the weekly benefit amount the individual is drawing.

51 (a) In determining whether or not any work is suitable for
52 an individual, the department shall consider the degree of risk
53 to the individual's health, safety, and morals; the individual's
54 physical fitness, prior training, experience, prior earnings,
55 length of unemployment, and prospects for securing local work in
56 his or her customary occupation; and the distance of the
57 available work from his or her residence.

58 (b) Notwithstanding any other provisions of this chapter,
59 work is not deemed suitable and benefits may not be denied to
60 any otherwise eligible individual for refusing to accept new
61 work under any of the following conditions:

62 1. The position offered is vacant due directly to a
63 strike, lockout, or other labor dispute.

64 2. The wages, hours, or other conditions of the work
65 offered are substantially less favorable to the individual than
66 those prevailing for similar work in the locality.

67 3. As a condition of being employed, the individual is
68 required to join a company union or to resign from or refrain
69 from joining any bona fide labor organization.

70 (c) If the department finds that an individual was
71 rejected for offered employment as the direct result of a
72 positive, confirmed drug test required as a condition of
73 employment, the individual is disqualified for refusing to
74 accept an offer of suitable work.

75 **Section 3. Section 443.1112, Florida Statutes, is created**

76 **to read:**

77 443.1112 Verification of reemployment assistance benefit
78 eligibility; detection of fraud.-

79 (1) The Department of Commerce must verify the identity of
80 each claimant who applies for reemployment assistance benefits
81 before paying any benefits to that individual.

82 (2) For the initial claim for benefits made by a claimant
83 and as necessary to verify a claimant's eligibility for
84 benefits, the department must cross-check the information
85 contained in the claim with information in the database of the
86 Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlements Program
87 established by the United States Bureau of Citizenship and
88 Immigration Services.

89 (3) For every 2 weeks that a claimant makes a claim for
90 benefits, including the initial claim for benefits, to verify a
91 claimant's eligibility for benefits, the department must cross-
92 check the information contained in the claim to make sure that
93 the claimant is:

94 (a) Living.

95 (b) Not incarcerated.

96 (c) Not already employed.

97 (4) The department shall do all of the following:

98 (a) Investigate any claim in this state associated with a
99 mailing address, a bank account, an e-mail address, a telephone
100 number, or an Internet protocol address that is also associated

101 with another existing claim for reemployment assistance benefits
102 in this state or another state and verify that the claim in this
103 state is legitimate and not fraudulent before paying any
104 benefits for the claim.

105 (b) Scrutinize any claim in this state filed from a
106 foreign Internet protocol address before paying any benefits for
107 the claim.

108 (c) Work with the United States Department of Labor, the
109 United States Department of Justice, other state workforce
110 agencies, the Department of Law Enforcement, the state
111 attorneys, or the Office of the Statewide Prosecutor to share
112 information related to fraudulent claims or attempted fraudulent
113 claims to the extent feasible for further investigation and
114 proceedings brought under this chapter.

115 (d) Maintain a web page through which an individual or an
116 employer may report known or suspected violations of this
117 chapter, including identity theft or fraud. Each year, the
118 department shall notify employers in this state of this web page
119 for reporting violations.

120 (e) Each year, make available on its website a report
121 identifying the number of fraudulent reemployment assistance
122 claims identified for the prior year, the number of claims not
123 paid due to successful detection of fraudulent intentions, the
124 number of claims and the amount of reemployment assistance
125 benefits paid against claims subsequently identified as

126 fraudulent, the amount of fraudulent overpayments recovered, and
127 the number of fraudulent claims referred for investigation and
128 possible prosecution. The report must also list the sources of
129 information that were used to cross-check claims during the
130 reporting period.

131 **Section 4.** This act shall take effect July 1, 2025.