

By the Committee on Commerce and Tourism; and Senator Rodriguez

577-03067-25

20251238c1

A bill to be entitled  
An act relating to verification of reemployment assistance benefit eligibility; providing a short title; amending s. 443.101, F.S.; revising circumstances under which the Department of Commerce may disqualify claimants from receiving reemployment assistance benefits; creating s. 443.1112, F.S.; requiring the department to verify claimants' identities before paying reemployment assistance benefits; requiring the department to cross-check certain information on a specified schedule; providing duties of the department; requiring the department to maintain a web page and an e-mail address for a specified purpose and to notify employers each year of the web page and e-mail address; requiring the department to annually make certain information available on its website; providing construction; amending s. 443.091, F.S.; conforming a provision to changes made by the act; providing an effective date.

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

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

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

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

(2) If the Department of Commerce finds that the individual

577-03067-25

20251238c1

has failed without good cause to apply for available suitable work; to appear, on three or more occasions, for a scheduled job interview without notifying the prospective employer of the need to cancel or reschedule the interview; ~~to~~ accept suitable work within 2 business days when offered to him or her; ~~to~~, ~~or~~ return to the individual's customary self-employment when directed by the department; or to return to employment when recalled to work by the individual's employer after a temporary layoff, the disqualification continues for the full period of unemployment next ensuing after he or she failed without good cause to apply for available suitable work; to appear, on three or more occasions, for a scheduled job interview without notifying the prospective employer of the need to cancel or reschedule the interview; ~~to~~ accept suitable work; ~~or~~ to return to his or her customary employment or self-employment, and until the individual has earned income of at least 17 times his or her weekly benefit amount. The department shall by rule adopt criteria to implement this subsection, including for determining the "suitability of work," as used in this section. In developing these rules, the department shall consider the duration of a claimant's unemployment in determining the suitability of work and the suitability of proposed rates of compensation for available work. Further, after an individual has received 25 weeks of benefits in a single year, suitable work is a job that pays the minimum wage and is 120 percent or more of the weekly benefit amount the individual is drawing.

(a) In determining whether or not any work is suitable for an individual, the department shall consider the degree of risk to the individual's health, safety, and morals; the individual's

577-03067-25

20251238c1

59 physical fitness, prior training, experience, prior earnings,  
60 length of unemployment, and prospects for securing local work in  
61 his or her customary occupation; and the distance of the  
62 available work from his or her residence.

63 (b) Notwithstanding ~~any other provisions of~~ this chapter,  
64 work is not deemed suitable and benefits may not be denied to  
65 any otherwise eligible individual for refusing to accept new  
66 work under any of the following conditions:

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

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

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

75 (c) If the department finds that an individual was rejected  
76 for offered employment as the direct result of a positive,  
77 confirmed drug test required as a condition of employment, the  
78 individual is disqualified for refusing to accept an offer of  
79 suitable work.

80 Section 3. Section 443.1112, Florida Statutes, is created  
81 to read:

82 443.1112 Verification of reemployment assistance benefit  
83 eligibility; detection of fraud.—

84 (1) The Department of Commerce shall verify the identity of  
85 each claimant who applies for reemployment assistance benefits  
86 before paying any benefits to that individual.

87 (2) For the initial claim for benefits made by a claimant

577-03067-25

20251238c1

and as necessary to verify a claimant's eligibility for  
benefits, the department shall cross-check the information  
contained in the claim with information in the database of the  
Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlements Program  
established by the United States Bureau of Citizenship and  
Immigration Services.

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

(a) Living.

(b) Not incarcerated.

(c) Not already employed.

(d) Not filing fraudulent or duplicate claims.

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

(a) Investigate any claim in this state associated with a  
mailing address, a bank account, an e-mail address, a telephone  
number, or an Internet protocol address that is also associated  
with another existing claim for reemployment assistance benefits  
in this state or another state and verify that the claim in this  
state is legitimate and not fraudulent before paying any  
benefits for the claim.

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

(c) Refer any suspected fraudulent or attempted fraudulent  
claim identified by the department to the Department of Legal  
Affairs and the state attorney of the judicial circuit in which

577-03067-25

20251238c1

the suspected fraudulent claim originated for further  
investigation and potential prosecution.

(d) Maintain a web page and an e-mail address through which  
an individual or an employer may report known or suspected  
violations of this chapter, including identity theft, fraud, or  
reasons for which a claimant would be disqualified for benefits  
under s. 443.101, including, but not limited to, failing to  
appear for a previously scheduled job interview without  
notifying the prospective employer of the need to cancel or  
reschedule the interview or failing to accept suitable work  
within 2 business days when offered to him or her. Each year,  
the department shall notify employers in this state of this web  
page and e-mail address for reporting violations.

(e) Annually make available on its website a report  
identifying the number of fraudulent reemployment assistance  
claims identified for the previous year, the number of claims  
not paid due to successful detection of fraudulent intentions,  
the number of claims and the amount of reemployment assistance  
benefits paid against claims subsequently identified as  
fraudulent, the amount of fraudulent overpayments recovered, and  
the number of fraudulent claims referred for investigation and  
possible prosecution. The report must also list the sources of  
information that were used to cross-check claims during the  
reporting period.

(5) This section may not be construed as limiting the  
ability of the department to adopt additional mechanisms and  
strategies designed to limit waste, fraud, and abuse in the  
reemployment assistance program.

Section 4. Paragraph (d) of subsection (1) of section

577-03067-25

20251238c1

146 443.091, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

147 443.091 Benefit eligibility conditions.—

148 (1) An unemployed individual is eligible to receive  
149 benefits for any week only if the Department of Commerce finds  
150 that:

151 (d) She or he is able to work and is available for work. In  
152 order to assess eligibility for a claimed week of unemployment,  
153 the department shall develop criteria to determine a claimant's  
154 ability to work and availability for work. A claimant must be  
155 actively seeking work in order to be considered available for  
156 work. This means engaging in systematic and sustained efforts to  
157 find work, including contacting at least five prospective  
158 employers for each week of unemployment claimed. The department  
159 may require the claimant to provide proof of such efforts to the  
160 one-stop career center as part of reemployment services. A  
161 claimant's proof of work search efforts may not include the same  
162 prospective employer at the same location in 3 consecutive  
163 weeks, unless the employer has indicated since the time of the  
164 initial contact that the employer is hiring. The department  
165 shall conduct random reviews of work search information provided  
166 by claimants. As an alternative to contacting at least five  
167 prospective employers for any week of unemployment claimed, a  
168 claimant may, for that same week, report in person to a one-stop  
169 career center to meet with a representative of the center and  
170 access reemployment services of the center. The center shall  
171 keep a record of the services or information provided to the  
172 claimant and shall provide the records to the department upon  
173 request by the department. However:

174 1. Notwithstanding ~~any other provision of~~ this paragraph or

577-03067-25

20251238c1

paragraphs (b) and (e), an otherwise eligible individual may not be denied benefits for any week because she or he is in training with the approval of the department, or by reason of s.

443.101(2) relating to failure to apply for, failure to appear for an interview for, or refusal to accept, suitable work.

Training may be approved by the department in accordance with criteria prescribed by rule. A claimant's eligibility during approved training is contingent upon satisfying eligibility conditions prescribed by rule.

2. Notwithstanding ~~any other provision of~~ this chapter, an otherwise eligible individual who is in training approved under s. 236(a)(1) of the Trade Act of 1974, as amended, may not be determined ineligible or disqualified for benefits due to enrollment in such training or because of leaving work that is not suitable employment to enter such training. As used in this subparagraph, the term "suitable employment" means work of a substantially equal or higher skill level than the worker's past adversely affected employment, as defined for purposes of the Trade Act of 1974, as amended, the wages for which are at least 80 percent of the worker's average weekly wage as determined for purposes of the Trade Act of 1974, as amended.

3. Notwithstanding any other provision of this section, an otherwise eligible individual may not be denied benefits for any week because she or he is before any state or federal court pursuant to a lawfully issued summons to appear for jury duty.

4. Union members who customarily obtain employment through a union hiring hall may satisfy the work search requirements of this paragraph by reporting daily to their union hall.

5. The work search requirements of this paragraph do not

577-03067-25

20251238c1

204 apply to persons who are unemployed as a result of a temporary  
205 layoff or who are claiming benefits under an approved short-time  
206 compensation plan as provided in s. 443.1116.

207 6. In small counties as defined in s. 120.52(19), a  
208 claimant engaging in systematic and sustained efforts to find  
209 work must contact at least three prospective employers for each  
210 week of unemployment claimed.

211 7. The work search requirements of this paragraph do not  
212 apply to persons required to participate in reemployment  
213 services under paragraph (e).

214 Section 5. This act shall take effect July 1, 2025.