

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 to verify claimants'
11 eligibility under certain circumstances; providing
12 duties of the department; requiring the department to
13 maintain a web page for a specified purpose and to
14 notify employers each year of the web page; providing
15 annual reporting requirements; providing an effective
16 date.

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

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20 **Section 1.** This act may be cited as the "Promoting Work,
21 Deterring Fraud Act of 2026."

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

24 443.101 Disqualification for benefits.—An individual shall
25 be disqualified for benefits:

(2) If the Department of Commerce finds that the individual has failed without good cause to apply for available suitable work, to contact the required number of prospective employers per week for any week of unemployment claimed in a benefit year in accordance with s. 443.091, 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 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 notification, to accept suitable work, to ~~or~~ return to his or her customary self-employment, or to return to his or her employment after a temporary layoff, 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 criteria 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

51 available work. Further, after an individual has received 25
52 weeks of benefits in a single year, suitable work is a job that
53 pays the minimum wage and is 120 percent or more of the weekly
54 benefit amount the individual is drawing.

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

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

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

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

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

74 (c) If the department finds that an individual was
75 rejected for offered employment as the direct result of a

76 positive, confirmed drug test required as a condition of
77 employment, the individual is disqualified for refusing to
78 accept an offer of suitable work.

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

81 443.1112 Verification of reemployment assistance benefit
82 eligibility; detection of fraud.—

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

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

93 (3) For every 2 weeks that a claimant makes a claim for
94 benefits, including the initial claim for benefits, to verify a
95 claimant's eligibility for benefits, the department must cross-
96 check the information contained in the claim to ensure that the
97 claimant is:

98 (a) Living.

99 (b) Not incarcerated.

100 (c) Not already employed.

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

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

109 (b) Examine each claim filed from a foreign Internet
110 protocol address before paying any benefits for the claim.

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

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

123 (e) Each year, make available on its website a report
124 identifying for the prior year the number of fraudulent
125 reemployment assistance claims identified, the number of claims

126 not paid due to successful detection of fraudulent intentions,
127 the number of claims and the amount of reemployment assistance
128 benefits paid against claims subsequently identified as
129 fraudulent, the amount of fraudulent overpayments recovered, and
130 the number of fraudulent claims referred for investigation and
131 possible prosecution. The report must also list the sources of
132 information that were used to cross-check claims during the
133 reporting period.

134 **Section 4.** This act shall take effect July 1, 2026.