



General Assembly

January Session, 2021

Committee Bill No. 6344

LCO No. 5726



Referred to Committee on LABOR AND PUBLIC EMPLOYEES

Introduced by:
(LAB)

AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE OFFICE OF THE UNEMPLOYED WORKERS' ADVOCATE.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

- 1 Section 1. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) (a) The Labor Commissioner
2 shall, within available appropriations, establish the Office of the
3 Unemployed Workers' Advocate within the Labor Department to
4 provide assistance to individuals who are unemployed.
- 5 (b) The Office of the Unemployed Workers' Advocate may:
- 6 (1) Assist unemployed individuals seeking benefits administered by
7 the Labor Department under chapter 567 of the general statutes;
- 8 (2) Assist unemployed individuals to understand their rights and
9 responsibilities with respect to benefits administered by the department
10 under chapter 567 of the general statutes;
- 11 (3) Provide information to the public, agencies, legislators and others
12 regarding the problems and concerns of unemployed individuals and
13 make recommendations for resolving such problems and concerns;

14 (4) Assist unemployed individuals with the filing of appeals in
15 connection with the benefits administered by the department under
16 chapter 567 of the general statutes;

17 (5) Analyze and monitor the development and implementation of
18 federal, state and local laws, regulations and policies relating to
19 unemployed individuals and recommend changes the office deems
20 necessary to the appropriate federal, state or local governmental entity;

21 (6) Receive and review complaints of unemployed individuals and
22 make recommendations to the commissioner for resolving such
23 complaints;

24 (7) Access prior employment records of an unemployed individual to
25 the extent permitted under state and federal law;

26 (8) Establish and maintain an Internet web site and a toll-free number,
27 or any other free calling option, to allow unemployed individuals access
28 to the services and information provided by the Office of the
29 Unemployed Workers' Advocate; and

30 (9) Take any other actions necessary to fulfill the purposes of this
31 section.

32 (c) Not later than July 1, 2021, the Labor Commissioner shall
33 designate an Unemployed Workers' Advocate, who shall serve at the
34 pleasure of the commissioner, to manage the daily activities and duties
35 of the Office of the Unemployed Workers' Advocate. The Unemployed
36 Workers' Advocate shall have the necessary qualifications to perform
37 the duties of said office, including, but not limited to, having expertise
38 and experience in the fields of unemployment compensation benefits
39 and advocacy for the rights of unemployed individuals. Within
40 available appropriations, the Unemployed Workers' Advocate shall
41 appoint and employ such assistants, employees and personnel as
42 deemed necessary for the efficient and effective administration of the
43 activities of the office.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:

| | | |
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| Section 1 | <i>from passage</i> | New section |
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Statement of Purpose:

To establish the Office of the Unemployed Workers' Advocate.

[Proposed deletions are enclosed in brackets. Proposed additions are indicated by underline, except that when the entire text of a bill or resolution or a section of a bill or resolution is new, it is not underlined.]

Co-Sponsors: REP. ROJAS, 9th Dist.

H.B. 6344