



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, state agencies, legislators and  
12 others regarding the problems and concerns of unemployed individuals  
13 and 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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**LAB**      *Joint Favorable*