

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 70

BY SENATOR JACKSON

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

To urge and request the Louisiana congressional delegation to take actions as are necessary to support modification of the federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation supplement in such a manner as to encourage recipients to return to employment.

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in employers in agriculture, business, and industry being required to temporarily, and in some cases for a period of one year, shut down their operations and lay off their workers; and

WHEREAS, the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic were particularly devastating to small farmers and businesses and their ability to conduct normal operations, if they were able to operate at all; and

WHEREAS, these COVID-19 impacts to agricultural, business, and industrial operations across the state resulted in massive numbers of workers losing their employment in 2020, causing historic levels of unemployment benefit claiming by affected workers that overwhelmed the Louisiana Workforce Commission's unemployment claims technology and personnel; and

WHEREAS, Louisiana's unemployment insurance trust fund exceeded \$1.2 billion prior to the declarations of a statewide public health emergency that impacted employment in the public and private sectors of the state, and those declarations remained effective through the remainder of 2020; and

WHEREAS, the unprecedented amount of unemployment benefit claiming caused the state's unemployment trust fund to become insolvent, necessitating the Louisiana Workforce Commission having to borrow from the Federal Unemployment Account the amounts required to pay weekly benefit claims provided for by Louisiana law; and

WHEREAS, with the availability of vaccines to immunize individuals from the novel coronavirus, Louisiana's economy, along with states around the country, is finally recovering from the effects of the pandemic; and

WHEREAS, employers in agriculture, business, and industry are finally able to reopen, engage with customers, receive orders, increase production, and perform services but are experiencing difficulty finding the workers they need in order to do so, and in some cases are precluded from even reopening their shops; and

WHEREAS, these employers report some of their former employees refusing to return to work because their total weekly unemployment benefit amount supplemented by the federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation of \$300 per week exceeds what they would receive in wages; and

WHEREAS, it has long been understood that work is critical to a person's physical, mental, and emotional well-being because their self-esteem as contributing members of our society in large measure derives from partnering with others through work; and

WHEREAS, each day outside Louisiana's workforce deprives individuals of this self-esteem and sense of worth, damaging their mental and emotional health and eroding their work ethic.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby urge and request each member of the Louisiana congressional delegation to promote modifying the federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation supplement provided by the American Rescue Plan Act so that it would allow states to use such supplement to encourage unemployed individuals to return to employment.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that such modification should include the option to incentivize return to work by using the Pandemic Unemployment Compensation supplement to cover the difference between weekly wages individuals receive upon returning to work and the weekly unemployment benefit amount they had been receiving plus twenty percent of such amount.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to each member of the Louisiana congressional delegation.

PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES