

2021 Regular Session

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 122

BY REPRESENTATIVE LYONS

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

To continue the Unemployment Compensation and Trust Fund Task Force that was created pursuant to House Concurrent Resolution No. 36 of the 2020 Second Extraordinary Session of the Legislature of Louisiana to study and make recommendations for replenishing the unemployment trust fund and increasing the unemployment compensation weekly benefit amount and to submit a written report of its findings and recommendations to the Legislature of Louisiana not later than thirty days prior to the convening of the 2022 Regular Session.

WHEREAS, the state of Louisiana was struck by the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020, which caused some businesses to reduce their employees' hours or to temporarily, and in some cases, permanently, shut down and lay off employees; and

WHEREAS, the state is returning to some semblance of normalcy and as a result, businesses are also opening to full capacity and employees are returning back to work; however, there is still an unprecedented number of individuals who are filing for unemployment compensation benefits; and

WHEREAS, at the beginning of March 2020, the state's unemployment trust fund, which was solvent and prosperous, had a balance of approximately one billion five hundred million dollars; and

WHEREAS, as of May 2021, the state's unemployment trust fund, which was greatly depleted as a result of the unprecedented payment of unemployment compensation benefits, now has a balance of approximately fifty-one million dollars; and

WHEREAS, as a result of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, it is recognized that businesses have suffered a great economic impact; however, unemployed and partially employed workers have also suffered a great financial impact; and

WHEREAS, the state of Louisiana pays the third lowest average weekly benefit amounts of any state in the United States; and

WHEREAS, as a result of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, unemployed and partially employed workers have struggled to cover household expenses, such as rent or

mortgage, groceries, and utilities, and attempt to survive on a maximum weekly benefit amount of two hundred forty-seven dollars; and

WHEREAS, an increase in the maximum weekly benefit amount in the state's unemployment compensation program will not only greatly assist unemployed and partially employed Louisiana workers, but will have a significant impact on local economies; and

WHEREAS, Louisiana Law, R.S. 23:1474, provides that the unemployment trust fund offers a decrease in the tax rate for employers, a ten percent discount for employers, and an increase in the unemployment compensation weekly benefit amounts when the trust fund has reached a specific balance range; and

WHEREAS, this statutory provision and others should be examined to determine practical and feasible ways to replenish the unemployment trust fund and increase the unemployment compensation maximum weekly benefit amounts for claimants.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby continue the Unemployment Compensation and Trust Fund Task Force to study and make recommendations for replenishing the unemployment trust fund and increasing the unemployment compensation weekly benefit amount and to submit a written report of its findings and recommendations to the Legislature of Louisiana not later than thirty days prior to the convening of the 2022 Regular Session.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the membership of the task force shall continue to be as provided for in House Concurrent Resolution No. 36 of the 2020 Second Extraordinary Session of the Legislature of Louisiana as follows:

- (1) The president of the Senate or his designee.
- (2) The speaker of the House of Representatives or his designee.
- (3) The secretary of the Louisiana Workforce Commission or his designee.
- (4) One representative from the Louisiana AFL-CIO.
- (5) One representative from the Louisiana Budget Project.
- (6) One representative from the Workplace Justice Project.
- (7) One representative from the Louisiana Association of Business and Industry.
- (8) One representative from the National Federation of Independent Business.
- (9) One representative from Greater New Orleans, Inc.
- (10) One representative from Louisiana Women Lead.
- (11) One representative from the Louisiana Community and Technical College System.

(12) The Revenue Estimating Conference faculty member with revenue forecasting expertise.

(13) One representative from North Louisiana Economic Partnership.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Louisiana Workforce Commission shall continue to provide staff support as needed by the task force.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force shall continue to meet as frequently as it deems necessary for the timely performance of its duties.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force shall continue to study and make recommendations to matters that include but are not limited to the following:

- (1) Mechanisms or measures to replenish the unemployment trust fund.
- (2) Mechanisms or measures to generate at least one billion five hundred million dollars for the unemployment trust fund.
- (3) The advantages and disadvantages of increasing the weekly benefit amount.
- (4) Mechanisms or measures to increase the weekly benefit amount.
- (5) Mechanisms or measures for assisting the unemployed to re-enter the workforce, including training needed to develop new skills required for available jobs.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Resolution be transmitted to the secretary of the Louisiana Workforce Commission, the president of the Louisiana Association of Business and Industry, the Louisiana state director of the National Federation of Independent Business, the president of the Louisiana AFL-CIO, the executive director of the Louisiana Budget Project, the director of the Workplace Justice Project, the president of Greater New Orleans, Inc., the executive director of Louisiana Women Lead, the president of the Louisiana Community and Technical College System, and the faculty member serving on the Revenue Estimating Conference.

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE