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FLOOR DEBATE

February 9, 2004    LB 251, 1049  
                          LR 108

being based on personal reasons, and must be of a necessitous and compelling nature. A claimant's illness and compulsory retirement also constitute good cause. I believe the intent of the unemployment insurance system is to provide benefits to workers who are out of work through no fault of their own and who are actively seeking work. I believe the following example reflects the unfairness of our current system. A paraprofessional at a school district in my legislative district was offered employment last year, but decided to quit. She filed for benefits, and even though her claim was denied because she was offered employment, she began collecting benefits after a seven-week disqualification period. The school district had to pay several thousand dollars on her claim. At the time of the public hearing on LB 251, I asked the committee to conduct an interim study on this issue. As a result, Senator Vrtiska introduced LR 108, calling for the Business and Labor Committee to study Nebraska's unemployment compensation laws relating to benefits, eligibility, specifically those statutes that allow a worker to collect unemployment benefits even if that worker has been discharged for misconduct, or if the worker terminated employment without good cause. The study was also to examine our state's disqualification provisions and the pros and cons of changing to a requalification system of unemployment benefit determination. Over the interim, my office worked with Senator Vrtiska and his legal counsel, the Department of Labor, and several interested parties, including the legal counsel for the Department of Labor in Iowa. The state of Iowa uses a requalifying system. Under federal guidelines, a worker who quits his or her employment cannot be totally disqualified from the receipt of unemployment insurance benefits. However, 46 states have requalifying systems where individuals who are disqualified for voluntarily leaving work without good cause or having been discharged for misconduct are denied benefits for the duration of their employment until they work a specified number of weeks and/or earn a specified amount of wages at a new job in order to requalify for benefits and are subsequently separated from their new job employment for nondisqualifying reasons. In 2001 was the last year that we had the data available, but 72 per...72.5 percent of all separation determinations in Nebraska were for individuals who had voluntarily left their employment. In 95.5 percent of those