

LEGISLATIVE BILL 1055

Approved by the Governor April 12, 2010

Introduced by Carlson, 38.

FOR AN ACT relating to the Employment Security Law; to amend sections 48-628.02 and 48-628.03, Reissue Revised Statutes of Nebraska; to change provisions relating to extended benefits; to eliminate obsolete provisions and restructure provisions; to reorganize defined terms; to harmonize provisions; and to repeal the original sections.

Be it enacted by the people of the State of Nebraska,

Section 1. Section 48-628.02, Reissue Revised Statutes of Nebraska, is amended to read:

48-628.02 (1) As used in the Employment Security Law, unless the context otherwise requires:

(1) (a) Extended benefit period shall mean means a period subsequent to December 31, 1971, which (a) begins with the third week after a week for which there is a state on "on" indicator and (b) ends with either of the following weeks, whichever occurs later: (1) (i) The third week after the first week for which there is a state off "off" indicator or (2) (ii) the thirteenth consecutive week of such period, except that no extended benefit period may begin by reason of a state on "on" indicator before the fourteenth week following the end of a prior extended benefit period which was in effect with respect to this state;

(2) There is a state on indicator for this state for a week if the commissioner determines that for the period consisting of such week and the immediately preceding twelve weeks, the rate of insured unemployment, not seasonally adjusted, under the Employment Security Law: (a) Equaled or exceeded one hundred twenty percent of the average of such rates for the corresponding thirteen-week period ending in each of the preceding two calendar years and (b) equaled or exceeded four percent for weeks beginning prior to or on September 25, 1982, or five percent for weeks beginning after September 25, 1982, except that with respect to benefits for weeks of unemployment beginning after March 30, 1977, the determination of whether there has been a state on or off indicator beginning or ending any extended benefit period shall be made under this section as if (i) this subdivision did not contain subdivision (a) thereof and (ii) the four percent contained in subdivision (b) thereof were five percent for weeks beginning prior to or on September 25, 1982, or six percent for weeks beginning after September 25, 1982; except that, notwithstanding any such provision of this subdivision, any week for which there would otherwise be a state on indicator shall continue to be such a week and shall not be determined to be a week for which there is a state off indicator;

(3) There is a state off indicator for this state for a week if the commissioner determines that, for the period consisting of such week and the immediately preceding twelve weeks, either subdivision (2)(a) or (b) of this section was not satisfied;

(4) Rate of insured unemployment, for purposes of subdivisions (2) and (3) of this section, shall mean the percentage derived by dividing (a) the average weekly number of individuals filing claims for regular compensation in this state for weeks of unemployment with respect to the most recent thirteen-consecutive-week period, as determined by the commissioner on the basis of his or her reports to the United States Secretary of Labor, by (b) the average monthly employment covered under the Employment Security Law for the first four of the most recent six completed calendar quarters ending before the end of such thirteen-week period;

(5) Regular benefits shall mean benefits payable to an individual under the Employment Security Law of this state or under any other state law, including benefits payable to federal civilian employees and to ex-servicemen or ex-servicewomen pursuant to 5 U.S.C. chapter 85, other than extended benefits;

(6) (b) Extended benefits shall mean means benefits, including benefits payable to federal civilian employees and to ex-servicemen or ex-servicewomen pursuant to 5 U.S.C. chapter 85, payable to an individual under this section for weeks of unemployment in his or her eligibility period;

(7) (c) Eligibility period of an individual shall mean means the period consisting of the weeks in his or her benefit year which begin in an extended benefit period and, if his or her benefit year ends within such extended benefit period, any weeks thereafter which begin in such period.

Notwithstanding any other provision of the Employment Security Law, if the benefit year of any individual ends within an extended benefit period, the remaining balance of extended benefits that such individual would, but for this section, be entitled to receive in that extended benefit period, with respect to weeks of unemployment beginning after the end of the benefit year, shall be reduced, but not below zero, by the product of the number of weeks for which the individual received any amounts as trade readjustment allowances within that benefit year multiplied by the individual's weekly benefit amount for extended benefits;

~~(8)~~ (d) Exhaustee shall mean means an individual who, with respect to any week of unemployment in his or her eligibility period: ~~(a)~~

(i) (A) Has received, prior to such week, all of the regular benefits that were available to him or her under the Employment Security Law of this state or under the unemployment insurance law of any other state, law, including dependents' allowances and benefits payable to federal civilian employees and ex-servicemen or ex-servicewomen under 5 U.S.C. chapter 85, in his or her current benefit year that includes such week, except for the purposes of this subdivision, an individual shall be deemed to have received all of the regular benefits that were available to him or her although as a result of a pending appeal with respect to wages or employment or both wages and employment that were not considered in the original monetary determination in his or her benefit year, he or she may subsequently be determined to be entitled to added regular benefits; or ~~(b)~~ (B) his or her benefit year having expired prior to such week, has no, or insufficient, wages or employment or both wages and employment on the basis of which he or she could establish a new benefit year that would include such week; and ~~(c)-(1)~~ has

(ii) Has no right to unemployment benefits or allowances, as the case may be, under the Railroad Unemployment Insurance Act, the Trade Expansion Act of 1962, the Automotive Products Trade Act of 1965, and such other federal laws as are specified in regulations issued by the United States Secretary of Labor; and ~~(2)~~ has

(iii) Has not received and is not seeking unemployment benefits under the unemployment compensation law of Canada, but if he or she is seeking such benefits and the appropriate agency finally determines that he or she is not entitled to benefits under such law he or she is considered an exhaustee;

(e) Rate of insured unemployment means the percentage, used by the commissioner in determining whether there is a state "on" or state "off" indicator, derived by dividing (i) the average weekly number of individuals filing claims for regular compensation under the Employment Security Law for weeks of unemployment with respect to the most recent thirteen-consecutive-week period, as determined by the commissioner on the basis of his or her reports to the United States Secretary of Labor, by (ii) the average monthly employment covered under the Employment Security Law for the first four of the most recent six completed calendar quarters ending before the end of such thirteen-week period;

(f) Regular benefits means benefits payable to an individual under the Employment Security Law of this state or under the unemployment insurance law of any other state, including benefits payable to federal civilian employees and to ex-servicemen or ex-servicewomen pursuant to 5 U.S.C. chapter 85, other than extended benefits;

(g) State "off" indicator means a week that the commissioner determines that, for the period consisting of such week and the immediately preceding twelve weeks, neither subdivision (1)(h)(i) or (1)(h)(ii) of this section was satisfied; and

(h) State "on" indicator means a week that the commissioner determines that for the period consisting of such week and the immediately preceding twelve weeks, the rate of insured unemployment, not seasonally adjusted, under the Employment Security Law: (i) Equalled or exceeded one hundred twenty percent of the average of such rates for the corresponding thirteen-week period ending in each of the preceding two calendar years and equalled or exceeded five percent or (ii) equalled or exceeded six percent.

(2) Except when the result would be inconsistent with the other provisions of this section, as provided in the rules and regulations of the commissioner, the provisions of the Employment Security Law which apply to claims for or payment of regular benefits shall apply to claims for and payment of extended benefits. An individual shall be eligible to receive extended benefits with respect to any week of unemployment in his or her eligibility period only if the commissioner finds that with respect to such week: (a) Such individual is an exhaustee; (b) such individual has satisfied the requirements of the Employment Security Law for the receipt of regular benefits that are applicable to individuals claiming extended benefits, including not being subject to a disqualification for the receipt

of benefits; (c) sections 48-628.03 and 48-628.04 do not apply; and (d) such individual has been paid wages for insured work during the individual's base period equal to at least one and one-half times the wages paid in that calendar quarter of the individual's base period in which such wages were highest.

(3) The weekly extended benefit amount payable to an individual for a week of total unemployment in his or her eligibility period shall be an amount equal to the weekly benefit amount payable to him or her during his or her applicable benefit year. The total extended benefit amount payable to any eligible individual with respect to his or her applicable benefit year shall be the least of the following amounts: Fifty percent of the total amount of regular benefits which were payable to him or her under the Employment Security Law in his or her applicable benefit year; or thirteen times his or her weekly benefit amount which was payable to him or her under the Employment Security Law for a week of total unemployment in the applicable benefit year.

(4) Whenever an extended benefit period is to become effective in this state as a result of a state "on" indicator or an extended benefit period is to be terminated in this state as a result of a state "off" indicator, the commissioner shall make an appropriate public announcement. Computations required to determine the rate of insured unemployment shall be made by the commissioner in accordance with regulations prescribed by the United States Secretary of Labor. Any amount of extended benefits payable to any individual for any week, if not an even dollar amount, shall be rounded to the next lower full dollar amount.

(5) Notwithstanding any other provision of the Employment Security Law, during an extended benefit period, the Governor may provide for the payment of emergency unemployment compensation pursuant to Public Law 110-252, as amended, or any substantially similar federal unemployment compensation paid entirely from federal funds to individuals prior to the payment of extended benefits pursuant to sections 48-628.02 to 48-628.04.

~~(9) State law shall mean the unemployment insurance law of any state, approved by the United States Secretary of Labor under section 3304 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954; (a) except when the result would be inconsistent with the other provisions of this section, as provided in the rules and regulations of the commissioner, the provisions of the Employment Security Law which apply to claims for, or payment of, regular benefits shall apply to claims for, and the payment of, extended benefits; (b) an individual shall be eligible to receive extended benefits with respect to any week of unemployment in his or her eligibility period only if the commissioner finds that with respect to such week: (1) He or she is an exhaustee as defined in subdivision (8) of this section, (2) he or she has satisfied the requirements of the Employment Security Law for the receipt of regular benefits that are applicable to individuals claiming extended benefits, including not being subject to a disqualification for the receipt of benefits, (3) sections 48-628.03 and 48-628.04 do not apply, and (4) he or she has been paid wages for insured work during the individual's base period equal to at least one and one-half times the wages paid in that calendar quarter of the individual's base period in which such wages were highest; (c) the weekly extended benefit amount payable to an individual for a week of total unemployment in his or her eligibility period shall be an amount equal to the weekly benefit amount payable to him or her during his or her applicable benefit year; (d) the total extended benefit amount payable to any eligible individual with respect to his or her applicable benefit year shall be the least of the following amounts: (1) Fifty percent of the total amount of regular benefits which were payable to him or her under the Employment Security Law in his or her applicable benefit year; or (2) thirteen times his or her weekly benefit amount which was payable to him or her under the Employment Security Law for a week of total unemployment in the applicable benefit year; (e)(1) whenever an extended benefit period is to become effective in this state as a result of a state on indicator, or an extended benefit period is to be terminated in this state as a result of a state off indicator, the commissioner shall make an appropriate public announcement; (2) computations required by subdivision (4) of this section shall be made by the commissioner, in accordance with regulations prescribed by the United States Secretary of Labor; and (f) any amount of extended benefits payable to any individual for any week, if not an even dollar amount, shall be rounded to the next lower full dollar amount; and~~

~~(10) Notwithstanding any other provisions of the Employment Security Law, if the benefit year of any individual ends within an extended benefit period, the remaining balance of extended benefits that such individual would, but for this section, be entitled to receive in that extended benefit period, with respect to weeks of unemployment beginning after the end of the benefit year, shall be reduced, but not below zero, by the product of the number~~

of weeks for which the individual received any amounts as trade readjustment allowances within that benefit year multiplied by the individual's weekly benefit amount for extended benefits.

Sec. 2. Section 48-628.03, Reissue Revised Statutes of Nebraska, is amended to read:

48-628.03 (1) An individual shall be ineligible for payment of extended benefits for any week of unemployment in his or her eligibility period if the commissioner finds that during such period (a) he or she failed to accept any offer of suitable work or failed to apply for any suitable work to which he or she was referred by the commissioner or (b) he or she failed to actively engage in seeking work as prescribed under subsection (5) of this section.

(2) Any individual who has been found ineligible for extended benefits by reason of subsection (1) of this section shall also be denied benefits beginning with the first day of the week following the week in which such failure occurred and until ~~(a)~~ he or she (a) has been employed in each of four subsequent weeks, whether or not consecutive, and (b) has earned remuneration equal to not less than four times the extended weekly benefit amount.

(3) For purposes of this section, the term suitable work shall mean, with respect to any individual, any work which is within such individual's capabilities and for which the gross average weekly remuneration payable for the work exceeds the sum of the individual's average weekly benefit amount as determined under subdivision (9)(e) of section 48-628.02, payable to him or her during his or her applicable benefit year, plus the amount, if any, of supplemental unemployment compensation benefits as defined in section 501(c)(17)(D) of the Internal Revenue Code payable to such individual for such week. Such work must also pay wages equal to the higher of the federal minimum wage or the applicable state or local minimum wage. No individual shall be denied extended benefits for failure to accept an offer or referral to any job which meets the definition of suitability contained in this subsection if (a) the position was not offered to such individual in writing or was not listed with the employment service, (b) such failure could not result in a denial of benefits under the definition of suitable work for regular benefit claimants in subdivision (3) of section 48-628, to the extent that the criteria of suitability in that section are not inconsistent with the provisions of this subsection, or (c) the individual furnishes satisfactory evidence to the commissioner that his or her prospects for obtaining work in his or her customary occupation within a reasonably short period are good. If such evidence is deemed satisfactory for this purpose, the determination of whether any work is suitable with respect to such individual shall be made in accordance with the definition of suitable work in subdivision (3) of section 48-628 without regard to the definition specified by this subsection.

(4) Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection (3) of this section to the contrary, no work shall be deemed to be suitable work for an individual which does not accord with the labor standard provisions set forth under subdivision (3)(c) of section 48-628, nor shall an individual be denied benefits if such benefits would be deniable by reason of the provision set forth in subdivision (3)(d) of section 48-628.

(5) For the purposes of subsection (1) of this section, an individual shall be treated as actively engaged in seeking work during any week if the individual has engaged in a systematic and sustained effort to obtain work during such week and the individual furnishes tangible evidence that he or she has engaged in such effort during such week.

(6) The state employment service shall refer any claimant entitled to extended benefits under this section to any suitable work which meets the criteria prescribed in subsection (3) of this section.

(7) An individual shall not be eligible to receive extended benefits with respect to any week of unemployment in his or her eligibility period if such individual has been disqualified for benefits under subdivision (1), (2), or (3) of section 48-628 unless such individual has earned wages for services performed in subsequent employment in an amount not less than four hundred dollars.

Sec. 3. Original sections 48-628.02 and 48-628.03, Reissue Revised Statutes of Nebraska, are repealed.