

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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118th MAINE LEGISLATURE

FIRST REGULAR SESSION-1997

Legislative Document

No. 1110

S.P. 332

In Senate, February 18, 1997

**An Act to Decrease the Threshold Amount Required for Receiving
Unemployment.**

Reference to the Committee on Labor suggested and ordered printed.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Joy J. O'Brien".

JOY J. O'BRIEN
Secretary of the Senate

Presented by Senator RUHLIN of Penobscot.
Cosponsored by Representative HATCH of Skowhegan and
Senators: MICHAUD of Penobscot, RAND of Cumberland, Representative: SAMSON of Jay.

Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:

2
4 **Sec. 1. 26 MRSA §1192, sub-§5**, as amended by PL 1991, c. 885,
Pt. E, §39 and affected by §47, is further amended to read:

6 **5. Has earned wages.** For each eligible individual
8 establishing a benefit year on or after January 1, 1980, the
10 individual has been paid wages equal to or exceeding 2-times the
12 annual average weekly wage for insured work in each of 2
14 different quarters in the individual's base period and has been
16 paid total wages equal to or exceeding 6 3 times the annual
18 average weekly wage in the individual's base period for insured
20 work. The annual average weekly wage amount to be used for
22 purposes of this subsection is that which is applicable at the
24 time the individual files a request for determination of insured
26 status. For the purpose of this subsection, wages are counted as
28 "wages for insured work" for benefit purposes with respect to any
30 benefit year only if such benefit year begins subsequent to the
32 date on which the employer by whom such wages were paid has
34 satisfied the conditions of section 1043, subsection 9, or
36 section 1222, subsection 3, with respect to becoming an employer;
provided that no individual may receive benefits in a benefit
year, unless, subsequent to the beginning of the next preceding
benefit year during which that individual received benefits, that
individual performed services and earned remuneration for such
service in an amount equal to not less than 8 4 times that
individual's weekly benefit amount in employment by an employer
in the benefit year being established. This subsection applies
only to any individual requesting determination of insured status
on and after January 1, 1972. In determining a claimant's
qualification under this subsection, payments pursuant to former
Title 39, sections 54 and 55, the Workers' Compensation Act, and
former Title 39, sections 188 and 189, Title 39-A, sections 608
and 609, the Occupational Disease Law, are considered wages for
insured work.

38 **SUMMARY**

40 Under the current law, a person may not collect unemployment
42 compensation benefits unless the person has earned a minimum
44 amount determined through the use of a formula. Using the
46 formula, currently a person is eligible for benefits if the
person has earned at least \$873.46 in the last 2 quarters and a
total of \$2,620.38 over the first 4 of the last 5 completed
calendar quarters of the period used to calculate the person's
eligibility.

48 This bill changes the formula to reduce the threshold amount
50 by 50%, so that a person needs to earn a minimum of \$1,310.19 to
be eligible for unemployment compensation benefits.