

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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120th MAINE LEGISLATURE

SECOND REGULAR SESSION-2002

Legislative Document

No. 2151

H.P. 1645

House of Representatives, March 4, 2002

An Act to Extend Unemployment Benefits by 13 Weeks.

(AFTER DEADLINE)

(EMERGENCY)

Approved for introduction by a majority of the Legislative Council pursuant to Joint Rule 205.

Reference to the Committee on Labor suggested and ordered printed.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Millicent M. MacFarland".

MILLICENT M. MacFARLAND, Clerk

Presented by Representative BUNKER of Kossuth Township.

Under suspension of the rules, cosponsored by Senator EDMONDS of Cumberland and Representatives: ASH of Belfast, BERRY of Livermore, BLISS of South Portland, BROOKS of Winterport, CANAVAN of Waterville, CHICK of Lebanon, CHIZMAR of Lisbon, CLARK of Millinocket, COLWELL of Gardiner, DORR of Camden, DUNLAP of Old Town, DUPLESSIE of Westbrook, GERZOFISKY of Brunswick, GREEN of Monmouth, HATCH of Skowhegan, HUTTON of Bowdoinham, JONES of Greenville, KOFFMAN of Bar Harbor, McDONOUGH of Portland, McLAUGHLIN of Cape Elizabeth, NORBERT of Portland, NORTON of Bangor, PARADIS of Frenchville, PATRICK of Rumford, PINEAU of Jay, QUINT of Portland, RICHARDSON of Brunswick, Speaker SAXL of Portland, SMITH of Van Buren, TARAZEWICH of Waterboro, TESSIER of Fairfield, TUTTLE of Sanford, Senators: CATHCART of Penobscot, DAGGETT of Kennebec, MARTIN of Aroostook, ROTUNDO of Androscoggin, TREAT of Kennebec.

2 **Emergency preamble.** Whereas, Acts of the Legislature do not
become effective until 90 days after adjournment unless enacted
as emergencies; and

4 **Whereas,** Maine and the nation currently are experiencing an
6 economic recession that has resulted in layoffs and high rates of
unemployment; and

8 **Whereas,** the events of September 11, 2001 have exacerbated
10 the effects of the recession, causing current unemployment
benefits to fall short; and

12 **Whereas,** relief needs to be provided immediately to those
14 whose unemployment benefits are scheduled to terminate; and

16 **Whereas,** in the judgment of the Legislature, these facts
create an emergency within the meaning of the Constitution of
18 Maine and require the following legislation as immediately
necessary for the preservation of the public peace, health and
20 safety; now, therefore,

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

24 **Sec. 1. 26 MRSA §1191, sub-§4-A** is enacted to read:

26 **4-A. Temporary, emergency unemployment compensation.**
28 Beginning April 1, 2002 and ending March 31, 2003, a temporary
emergency unemployment compensation program, referred to in this
30 subsection as the "program," is created. The program provides
unemployment compensation benefits in addition to those provided
32 pursuant to subsection 4 to eligible individuals. For the
purposes of this subsection, an "eligible individual" is a person
34 who would be eligible to receive regular or other unemployment
benefits under this section and federal law but for the fact that
36 the individual has exhausted the unemployment benefits due that
individual on or after April 1, 2002, but prior to April 1,
38 2003. The amount of weekly compensation due an eligible
individual under the program is equal to the weekly amount of
40 regular unemployment compensation due that individual during that
individual's benefit year for a week of total unemployment. An
42 eligible individual also is eligible for the supplemental benefit
for dependents provided pursuant to subsection 6. The maximum
44 amount of benefits payable to an eligible individual is equal to
13 times that individual's average weekly benefit amount for the
46 benefit year. Except as otherwise provided in this subsection,
benefits claimed and paid under this subsection are subject to
48 the same terms and conditions as benefits claimed and paid under
this section. Benefits paid under the program are chargeable to
50 employers in the same manner as regular unemployment compensation.

This subsection is repealed April 1, 2003.

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Sec. 2. Retroactivity. This Act applies retroactively to April 1, 2002.

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Sec. 3. Contingent effective date. This Act takes effect only if the Federal Government fails to implement a similar program by July 1, 2002.

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Emergency clause. In view of the emergency cited in the preamble, this Act takes effect July 1, 2002.

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SUMMARY

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This bill enacts a temporary emergency unemployment compensation program to provide up to an additional 13 weeks of unemployment benefits to individuals whose unemployment benefits run out on or after April 1, 2002 but before April 1, 2003. Claims and payment of benefits and charges to employers are handled in the same manner as under the current unemployment compensation law. The program is repealed April 1, 2003 and takes effect only if the Federal Government has failed to enact a similar program by July 1, 2002.

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