

# House Research Act Summary

**CHAPTER:** 15

**SESSION:** 2009 Regular Session

**TOPIC:** Unemployment Insurance

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## Section

- 1** **Base period.** Provides for a base period calculation that is based on the last four completed calendar quarters before a person's application for unemployment benefits. This alternative base period is available for those who apply for benefits the month immediately following the last completed calendar quarter and who do not have enough wage credits in the current law base period (i.e. the first four of the last five completed quarters—known as the secondary base period) to qualify for benefits.
- 2** **Immediate family member.** Defined to mean an applicant's spouse, parent, stepparent, son, daughter, stepdaughter or stepson, grandson, or granddaughter.
- 3** **Reemployment assistance training.** Specifies that apprenticeship training meeting the requirements of an apprenticeship program under chapter 178 is "reemployment assistance training."
- 4** **Suitable employment.** Clarifies that a person will not be denied unemployment benefits if they were a part time employee prior to losing their job and are seeking part time (rather than full time) employment.
- 5** **Benefit accounts.** Allows the use of an applicant's wage detail information in certain cases where the employer's information is not available for calculating the alternative base period and requires an employer to provide wage detail information to the department within five days of a request for that information by the commissioner. This change is related to the alternative base period change made in section 1 and provides a means for the department to get the information necessary to process the application for benefits.

- 6**      **Wage credits.** Requires an applicant using the secondary base period to have wage credits in one quarter equal to at least \$1000 in order to qualify for benefits.
- 7**      **Available for suitable employment defined.** Under current law, to maintain eligibility for unemployment benefits, a student must be willing to quit school in order to accept suitable employment.
- The new language requires that a student must be willing to discontinue regularly scheduled classes to accept employment if the attendance would restrict the applicant from accepting suitable employment or if the scheduled class can't be changed or other arrangements can't be made. Reemployment assistance training is exempted from the requirement that classes in conflict with an employment opportunity be discontinued.
- 8**      **Quit.** Expands the circumstances under which a person can quit a job and still be eligible for unemployment benefits to include situations under which a person leaves employment to care for a family member due to an illness, injury, or disability; for domestic abuse of a family member; or to relocate to accompany a spouse whose job location changed.
- 9**      **Misconduct.** Specifies that employment misconduct does not include:
- conduct as a consequence of mental illness or impairment;
  - absence necessary to provide care to an immediate family member as a result of illness, injury, or disability; or
  - conduct resulting from the applicant or immediate family member being the victim of domestic abuse.
- 10**     **Federal funds.** Authorizes the use of federal stimulus package money to pay for unemployment insurance administrative costs.
- 11**     **Federal conformity.** States the purpose of sections of the bill are necessary to conform to the federal economic stimulus package and access resources available under that law.