

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2019

A N A C T

RELATING TO LABOR AND LABOR RELATIONS -- UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS AND  
DOMESTIC ABUSE

Introduced By: Representatives Lima, Costantino, Chippendale, Roberts, and Casey

Date Introduced: February 27, 2019

Referred To: House Corporations

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Section 28-44-17.1 of the General Laws in Chapter 28-44 entitled  
2 "Employment Security - Benefits" is hereby amended to read as follows:

3 **28-44-17.1. Voluntary leaving as protection from domestic abuse.**

4 (a) An individual shall be eligible for ~~waiting period credit or~~ benefits if that individual  
5 voluntarily leaves work due to circumstances directly resulting from domestic abuse, as defined  
6 in chapter 8.1 of title 8, and the individual:

7 (1) Reasonably fears future domestic abuse at or on route to or from the individual's place  
8 of employment;

9 (2) Wishes to relocate to another geographic area in order to avoid future domestic abuse  
10 against the individual or the individual's family; or

11 (3) Reasonably believes that leaving work is necessary for the future safety of the  
12 individual or the individual's family.

13 (b) ~~When determining whether an individual has experienced domestic abuse for the~~  
14 ~~purpose of employment benefits, the department of labor and training shall require that the~~  
15 ~~individual provide documentation of domestic abuse, including, but not limited to, police or court~~  
16 ~~records, or other documentation of domestic abuse from a shelter worker, attorney, member of the~~  
17 ~~clergy, or medical or other professional from whom the individual has sought assistance.~~

18 The department of labor and training, upon receipt of a claim for unemployment

1 compensation based upon § 28-44-17.1 shall give such claim priority, process the claim and pay  
2 the benefits to the individual within five (5) business days.

3 (c) The individual claiming benefits pursuant to this section shall not be subject to the  
4 provision of § 28-44-12 for a period of two (2) weeks subsequent to the filing of the claim.

5 (e) The department of labor and training may make a redetermination of whether an  
6 individual has experienced domestic abuse for the purpose of employment benefits, but not earlier  
7 than two (2) weeks after the date of the filing of the claim.

8 (f) The department of labor and training shall require that the individual provide  
9 documentation of domestic abuse but not earlier than two (2) weeks after the date of filing the  
10 claim.

11 ~~(e)~~(g) All documentation of evidence shall be kept confidential unless consent for  
12 disclosure is given by the individual.

13 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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EXPLANATION  
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL  
OF

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- 1           This act would expedite a victim of domestic abuse eligibility for and receipt of
- 2 unemployment benefits by removing the waiting period and other impediments.
- 3           This act would take effect upon passage.

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