

2019 -- S 0790

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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2019

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A N A C T

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

Introduced By: Senator Erin Lynch Prata

Date Introduced: April 04, 2019

Referred To: Senate Labor

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

A N A C T

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

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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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