

Unemployment Insurance Improvement Act

Section-by-Section Summary

SEC. 1. SHORT TITLE – The Unemployment Insurance Improvement Act

SEC. 2. FLOOR ON THE NUMBER OF WEEKS.

Requires states to offer at least 26 weeks of unemployment compensation. This requirement is a condition of employers in the state claiming a 5.4 percent tax credit against federal unemployment tax.

SEC. 3. BASE PERIOD.

Requires states to use a base period or alternative base period consisting of at least four quarters that includes the most recently completed calendar quarter. (The “base period” is the period of time the state uses to determine an individual’s entitlement to benefits.) This requirement is a condition of employers in the state claiming a 5.4 percent tax credit against federal unemployment tax.

SEC. 4. MINIMUM LEVEL OF PRIOR EMPLOYMENT.

Requires states to cover individuals who have at least \$1,000 of covered wages in the high quarter and at least \$1,500 in the base period. This requirement is a condition of employers in the state claiming a 5.4 percent tax credit against federal unemployment tax.

SEC. 5. PART-TIME WORK.

Prohibits states from denying unemployment compensation to an individual because they are seeking part-time work as long as they are seeking at least half the number of hours they typically worked in their base period. This section also requires states to allow individuals to work part time and continue to claim unemployment compensation as long as their earnings are less than their weekly benefit amount, and requires states to disregard earnings equal to one-third of the individual’s weekly benefit amount in calculating partial unemployment benefits. This requirement is a condition of employers in the state claiming a 5.4 percent tax credit against federal unemployment tax.

SEC. 6. ACCESS TO BENEFITS.

Requires that states require employers to provide information regarding unemployment compensation claim-filing to employees upon separation from employment; have in place methods for employers to notify the state workforce agency of employees who may apply for unemployment compensation due to short-term layoffs, business shutdowns, partial unemployment, and short-time compensation; and have an alternate means of claim filing for workers who are unable to use the online claim filing system.

Requires that state online claim filing systems meet the following accessibility requirements:

- Be accessible for individuals with limited English proficiency, individuals with disabilities, older individuals, and individuals with literacy challenges.
- Be available in any language spoken by more than 1 percent of the state’s population
- Be accessible via computer, tablet, or mobile
- Allow for electronic submission of documents
- Be available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week (with the exception of maintenance)
- Provide for self-service account recovery
- Provide multiple methods of communication with applicants and claimants