
SUBSTITUTE HOUSE BILL 1106

State of Washington

68th Legislature

2023 Regular Session

By House Labor & Workplace Standards (originally sponsored by Representatives Fosse, Reeves, Reed, Berry, Doglio, Wylie, Kloba, Santos, and Ormsby)

1 AN ACT Relating to qualifications for unemployment insurance when
2 an individual voluntarily leaves work; amending RCW 50.20.050 and
3 50.29.021; adding a new section to chapter 50.04 RCW; and creating a
4 new section.

5 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

6 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** A new section is added to chapter 50.04
7 RCW to read as follows:

8 "Vulnerable adult" has the same meaning as in RCW 74.34.020.

9 **Sec. 2.** RCW 50.20.050 and 2022 c 268 s 42 are each amended to
10 read as follows:

11 (1) With respect to separations that occur on or after September
12 6, 2009, and for separations that occur before April 4, 2021:

13 (a) A claimant shall be disqualified from benefits beginning with
14 the first day of the calendar week in which the claimant left work
15 voluntarily without good cause and thereafter for seven calendar
16 weeks and until the claimant obtains bona fide work in employment
17 covered by this title and earned wages in that employment equal to
18 seven times the claimant's weekly benefit amount. Good cause reasons
19 to leave work are limited to reasons listed in (b) of this
20 subsection.

1 The disqualification shall continue if the work obtained is a
2 mere sham to qualify for benefits and is not bona fide work. In
3 determining whether work is of a bona fide nature, the commissioner
4 shall consider factors including but not limited to the following:

5 (i) The duration of the work;

6 (ii) The extent of direction and control by the employer over the
7 work; and

8 (iii) The level of skill required for the work in light of the
9 claimant's training and experience.

10 (b) A claimant has good cause and is not disqualified from
11 benefits under (a) of this subsection only under the following
12 circumstances:

13 (i) The claimant has left work to accept a bona fide offer of
14 bona fide work as described in (a) of this subsection;

15 (ii) The separation was necessary because of the illness or
16 disability of the claimant or the death, illness, or disability of a
17 member of the claimant's immediate family if:

18 (A) The claimant pursued all reasonable alternatives to preserve
19 the claimant's employment status by requesting a leave of absence, by
20 having promptly notified the employer of the reason for the absence,
21 and by having promptly requested reemployment when again able to
22 assume employment. These alternatives need not be pursued, however,
23 when they would have been a futile act, including those instances
24 when the futility of the act was a result of a recognized labor/
25 management dispatch system; and

26 (B) The claimant terminated the claimant's employment status, and
27 is not entitled to be reinstated to the same position or a comparable
28 or similar position;

29 (iii) The claimant: (A) Left work to relocate for the employment
30 of a spouse or domestic partner that is outside the existing labor
31 market area; and (B) remained employed as long as was reasonable
32 prior to the move;

33 (iv) The separation was necessary to protect the claimant or the
34 claimant's immediate family members from domestic violence, as
35 defined in RCW 7.105.010, or stalking, as defined in RCW 9A.46.110;

36 (v) The claimant's usual compensation was reduced by twenty-five
37 percent or more;

38 (vi) The claimant's usual hours were reduced by twenty-five
39 percent or more;

1 (vii) The claimant's worksite changed, such change caused a
2 material increase in distance or difficulty of travel, and, after the
3 change, the commute was greater than is customary for workers in the
4 claimant's job classification and labor market;

5 (viii) The claimant's worksite safety deteriorated, the claimant
6 reported such safety deterioration to the employer, and the employer
7 failed to correct the hazards within a reasonable period of time;

8 (ix) The claimant left work because of illegal activities in the
9 claimant's worksite, the claimant reported such activities to the
10 employer, and the employer failed to end such activities within a
11 reasonable period of time;

12 (x) The claimant's usual work was changed to work that violates
13 the claimant's religious convictions or sincere moral beliefs; or

14 (xi) The claimant left work to enter an apprenticeship program
15 approved by the Washington state apprenticeship training council.
16 Benefits are payable beginning Sunday of the week prior to the week
17 in which the claimant begins active participation in the
18 apprenticeship program.

19 (2) With respect to separations that occur on or after April 4,
20 2021:

21 (a) A claimant shall be disqualified from benefits beginning with
22 the first day of the calendar week in which the claimant has left
23 work voluntarily without good cause and thereafter for seven calendar
24 weeks and until the claimant has obtained bona fide work in
25 employment covered by this title and earned wages in that employment
26 equal to seven times the claimant's weekly benefit amount. Good cause
27 reasons to leave work are limited to reasons listed in (b) of this
28 subsection.

29 The disqualification shall continue if the work obtained is a
30 mere sham to qualify for benefits and is not bona fide work. In
31 determining whether work is of a bona fide nature, the commissioner
32 shall consider factors including but not limited to the following:

33 (i) The duration of the work;

34 (ii) The extent of direction and control by the employer over the
35 work; and

36 (iii) The level of skill required for the work in light of the
37 claimant's training and experience.

38 (b) A claimant has good cause and is not disqualified from
39 benefits under (a) of this subsection only under the following
40 circumstances:

1 (i) The claimant has left work to accept a bona fide offer of
2 bona fide work as described in (a) of this subsection;

3 (ii) The separation was necessary because ~~((of the))~~: Of the
4 illness or disability of the claimant ((of)); of the death, illness,
5 or disability of a member of the claimant's immediate family ((if))
6 for separations that occur before September 3, 2023; of the death,
7 illness, or disability of a family member for separations that occur
8 on or after September 3, 2023; or the care for a child or a
9 vulnerable adult in the claimant's care is inaccessible for
10 separations that occur on or after July 7, 2024. However, to qualify
11 based on a circumstance in this subsection (2)(b)(ii), the following
12 requirements must be met:

13 (A) The claimant made reasonable efforts to preserve the
14 claimant's employment status by requesting ~~((a leave of absence, by~~
15 ~~having promptly notified))~~ changes in working conditions or work
16 schedule that would accommodate the death, illness, disability, or
17 caregiving inaccessibility, or by requesting a leave of absence,
18 promptly notifying the employer of the reason for the absence, and
19 ~~((by having promptly requested))~~ promptly requesting reemployment
20 when again able to assume employment. These alternatives need not be
21 pursued, however, when they would have been a futile act, including
22 those instances when the futility of the act was a result of a
23 recognized labor/management dispatch system; and

24 (B) The claimant terminated the claimant's employment status, and
25 is not entitled to be reinstated to the same position or a comparable
26 or similar position;

27 (iii) The claimant: (A) Left work to relocate for the employment
28 of a spouse or domestic partner that is outside the existing labor
29 market area; and (B) remained employed as long as was reasonable
30 prior to the move;

31 (iv) The separation was necessary to protect the claimant or the
32 claimant's immediate family members from domestic violence, as
33 defined in RCW 7.105.010, or stalking, as defined in RCW 9A.46.110;

34 (v) The claimant's usual compensation was reduced by twenty-five
35 percent or more;

36 (vi) (A) The claimant's usual hours were reduced by twenty-five
37 percent or more; or

38 (B) If, for separations that occur on or after July 7, 2024, the
39 claimant has had a regularly scheduled shift or split shift start or
40 end time for the prior 90 calendar days, and the employer, without

1 request by the claimant and not based on a system of seniority,
2 changes the regularly scheduled shift or split shift start or end
3 time by six or more hours for that shift on a nontemporary basis;

4 (vii) The claimant's worksite changed, such change caused a
5 material increase in distance or difficulty of travel, and, after the
6 change, the commute was greater than is customary for workers in the
7 individual's job classification and labor market;

8 (viii) The claimant's worksite safety deteriorated, the claimant
9 reported such safety deterioration to the employer, and the employer
10 failed to correct the hazards within a reasonable period of time;

11 (ix) The claimant left work because of illegal activities in the
12 claimant's worksite, the claimant reported such activities to the
13 employer, and the employer failed to end such activities within a
14 reasonable period of time;

15 (x) The claimant's usual work was changed to work that violates
16 the claimant's religious convictions or sincere moral beliefs;

17 (xi) The claimant left work to enter an apprenticeship program
18 approved by the Washington state apprenticeship training council.
19 Benefits are payable beginning Sunday of the week prior to the week
20 in which the claimant begins active participation in the
21 apprenticeship program; ((~~or~~))

22 (xii) During a public health emergency:

23 (A) The claimant was unable to perform the claimant's work for
24 the employer from the claimant's home;

25 (B) The claimant is able to perform, available to perform, and
26 can actively seek suitable work which can be performed for an
27 employer from the claimant's home; and

28 (C) The claimant or another individual residing with the claimant
29 is at higher risk of severe illness or death from the disease that is
30 the subject of the public health emergency because the higher risk
31 individual:

32 (I) Was in an age category that is defined as high risk for the
33 disease that is the subject of the public health emergency by the
34 federal centers for disease control and prevention, the department of
35 health, or the equivalent agency in the state where the individual
36 resides; or

37 (II) Has an underlying health condition, verified as required by
38 the department by rule, that is identified as a risk factor for the
39 disease that is the subject of the public health emergency by the
40 federal centers for disease control and prevention, the department of

1 health, or the equivalent agency in the state where the individual
2 resides; or

3 (xiii) For separations that occur on or after July 7, 2024, the
4 claimant: (A) Left work to relocate in order to follow a minor child
5 who moved outside of the claimant's labor market; (B) remained
6 employed as long as was reasonable prior to relocating; and (C) had
7 parental rights over the minor child at the time of the job
8 separation.

9 (3) With respect to claims that occur on or after July 4, 2021, a
10 claimant has good cause and is not disqualified from benefits under
11 subsection (2)(a) of this section under the following circumstances,
12 in addition to those listed under subsection (2)(b) of this section,
13 if, during a public health emergency, the claimant worked at a health
14 care facility as defined in RCW 9A.50.010, was directly involved in
15 the delivery of health services, and left work for the period of
16 quarantine consistent with the recommended guidance from the United
17 States centers for disease control and prevention or subject to the
18 direction of the state or local health jurisdiction because of
19 exposure to or contracting the disease that is the subject of the
20 declaration of the public health emergency.

21 (4) Notwithstanding subsection (1) of this section, a claimant
22 who was simultaneously employed in full-time employment and part-time
23 employment and is otherwise eligible for benefits from the loss of
24 the full-time employment shall not be disqualified from benefits
25 because the claimant:

26 (a) Voluntarily quit the part-time employment before the loss of
27 the full-time employment; and

28 (b) Did not have prior knowledge that the claimant would be
29 separated from full-time employment.

30 **Sec. 3.** RCW 50.29.021 and 2021 c 251 s 4 are each amended to
31 read as follows:

32 (1)(a) An experience rating account shall be established and
33 maintained for each employer, except employers as described in RCW
34 50.44.010, 50.44.030, and 50.50.030 who have properly elected to make
35 payments in lieu of contributions, taxable local government employers
36 as described in RCW 50.44.035, and those employers who are required
37 to make payments in lieu of contributions, based on existing records
38 of the employment security department.

1 (b) Benefits paid to an eligible individual shall be charged to
2 the experience rating accounts of each of such individual's employers
3 during the individual's base year in the same ratio that the wages
4 paid by each employer to the individual during the base year bear to
5 the wages paid by all employers to that individual during that base
6 year, except as otherwise provided in this section.

7 (c) When the eligible individual's separating employer is a
8 covered contribution paying base year employer, benefits paid to the
9 eligible individual shall be charged to the experience rating account
10 of only the individual's separating employer if the individual
11 qualifies for benefits under:

12 (i) RCW 50.20.050 (1)(b)(i) or (2)(b)(i), as applicable, and
13 became unemployed after having worked and earned wages in the bona
14 fide work;

15 (ii) RCW 50.20.050 (1)(b)(v) through (x) or (2)(b)(v) through
16 (x); or

17 (iii) During a public health emergency, the claimant worked at a
18 health care facility as defined in RCW 9A.50.010, was directly
19 involved in the delivery of health services, and was terminated from
20 work due to entering quarantine because of exposure to or contracting
21 the disease that is the subject of the declaration of the public
22 health emergency.

23 (2) The legislature finds that certain benefit payments, in whole
24 or in part, should not be charged to the experience rating accounts
25 of employers except those employers described in RCW 50.44.010,
26 50.44.030, and 50.50.030 who have properly elected to make payments
27 in lieu of contributions, taxable local government employers
28 described in RCW 50.44.035, and those employers who are required to
29 make payments in lieu of contributions, as follows:

30 (a) Benefits paid to any individual later determined to be
31 ineligible shall not be charged to the experience rating account of
32 any contribution paying employer, except as provided in subsection
33 (4) of this section.

34 (b) Benefits paid to an individual filing under the provisions of
35 chapter 50.06 RCW shall not be charged to the experience rating
36 account of any contribution paying employer only if:

37 (i) The individual files under RCW 50.06.020(1) after receiving
38 crime victims' compensation for a disability resulting from a
39 nonwork-related occurrence; or

40 (ii) The individual files under RCW 50.06.020(2).

1 (c) Benefits paid which represent the state's share of benefits
2 payable as extended benefits defined under RCW 50.22.010(6) shall not
3 be charged to the experience rating account of any contribution
4 paying employer.

5 (d) In the case of individuals who requalify for benefits under
6 RCW 50.20.050 or 50.20.060, benefits based on wage credits earned
7 prior to the disqualifying separation shall not be charged to the
8 experience rating account of the contribution paying employer from
9 whom that separation took place.

10 (e) Benefits paid to an individual who qualifies for benefits
11 under RCW 50.20.050(1)(b) (iv) or (xi), (2)(b) (iv), (xi), (~~(xii)~~)
12 (xii), or (xiii), or (3), as applicable, shall not be charged to the
13 experience rating account of any contribution paying employer.

14 (f) Benefits paid that exceed the benefits that would have been
15 paid if the weekly benefit amount for the claim had been determined
16 as one percent of the total wages paid in the individual's base year
17 shall not be charged to the experience rating account of any
18 contribution paying employer. This subsection (2)(f) does not apply
19 to the calculation of contribution rates under RCW 50.29.025 for rate
20 year 2010 and thereafter.

21 (g) Upon approval of an individual's training benefits plan
22 submitted in accordance with RCW 50.22.155(2), an individual is
23 considered enrolled in training, and regular benefits beginning with
24 the week of approval shall not be charged to the experience rating
25 account of any contribution paying employer.

26 (h) Training benefits paid to an individual under RCW 50.22.155
27 shall not be charged to the experience rating account of any
28 contribution paying employer.

29 (i)(i) Benefits paid during the one week waiting period when the
30 one week waiting period is fully paid or fully reimbursed by the
31 federal government shall not be charged to the experience rating
32 account of any contribution paying employer.

33 (ii) In the event the one week waiting period is partially paid
34 or partially reimbursed by the federal government, the department
35 may, by rule, elect to not charge, in full or in part, benefits paid
36 during the one week waiting period to the experience rating account
37 of any contribution paying employer.

38 (j) Benefits paid for all weeks starting with the week ending
39 March 28, 2020, and ending with the week ending May 30, 2020, shall

1 not be charged to the experience rating account of any contribution
2 paying employer.

3 (3) (a) A contribution paying base year employer, except employers
4 as provided in subsection (5) of this section, not otherwise eligible
5 for relief of charges for benefits under this section, may receive
6 such relief if the benefit charges result from payment to an
7 individual who:

8 (i) Last left the employ of such employer voluntarily for reasons
9 not attributable to the employer;

10 (ii) Was discharged for misconduct or gross misconduct connected
11 with his or her work not a result of inability to meet the minimum
12 job requirements;

13 (iii) Is unemployed as a result of closure or severe curtailment
14 of operation at the employer's plant, building, worksite, or other
15 facility. This closure must be for reasons directly attributable to a
16 catastrophic occurrence such as fire, flood, or other natural
17 disaster, or to the presence of any dangerous, contagious, or
18 infectious disease that is the subject of a public health emergency
19 at the employer's plant, building, worksite, or other facility;

20 (iv) Continues to be employed on a regularly scheduled permanent
21 part-time basis by a base year employer and who at some time during
22 the base year was concurrently employed and subsequently separated
23 from at least one other base year employer. Benefit charge relief
24 ceases when the employment relationship between the employer
25 requesting relief and the claimant is terminated. This subsection
26 does not apply to shared work employers under chapter 50.60 RCW;

27 (v) Continues to be employed on a regularly scheduled permanent
28 part-time basis by a base year employer and who qualified for two
29 consecutive unemployment claims where wages were attributable to at
30 least one employer who employed the individual in both base years.
31 Benefit charge relief ceases when the employment relationship between
32 the employer requesting relief and the claimant is terminated. This
33 subsection does not apply to shared work employers under chapter
34 50.60 RCW;

35 (vi) Was hired to replace an employee who is a member of the
36 military reserves or National Guard and was called to federal active
37 military service by the president of the United States and is
38 subsequently laid off when that employee is reemployed by their
39 employer upon release from active duty within the time provided for
40 reemployment in RCW 73.16.035;

1 (vii) Worked for an employer for 20 weeks or less, and was laid
2 off at the end of temporary employment when that employee temporarily
3 replaced a permanent employee receiving family or medical leave
4 benefits under Title 50A RCW, and the layoff is due to the return of
5 that permanent employee. This subsection (3)(a)(vii) applies to
6 claims with an effective date on or after January 1, 2020; or

7 (viii) Was discharged because the individual was unable to
8 satisfy a job prerequisite required by law or administrative rule.

9 (b) The employer requesting relief of charges under this
10 subsection must request relief in writing within (~~thirty~~) 30 days
11 following mailing to the last known address of the notification of
12 the valid initial determination of such claim, stating the date and
13 reason for the separation or the circumstances of continued
14 employment. The commissioner, upon investigation of the request,
15 shall determine whether relief should be granted.

16 (4) When a benefit claim becomes invalid due to an amendment or
17 adjustment of a report where the employer failed to report or
18 inaccurately reported hours worked or remuneration paid, or both, all
19 benefits paid will be charged to the experience rating account of the
20 contribution paying employer or employers that originally filed the
21 incomplete or inaccurate report or reports. An employer who
22 reimburses the trust fund for benefits paid to workers and who fails
23 to report or inaccurately reported hours worked or remuneration paid,
24 or both, shall reimburse the trust fund for all benefits paid that
25 are based on the originally filed incomplete or inaccurate report or
26 reports.

27 (5) An employer's experience rating account may not be relieved
28 of charges for a benefit payment and an employer who reimburses the
29 trust fund for benefit payments may not be credited for a benefit
30 payment if a benefit payment was made because the employer or
31 employer's agent failed to respond timely or adequately to a written
32 request of the department for information relating to the claim or
33 claims without establishing good cause for the failure and the
34 employer or employer's agent has a pattern of such failures. The
35 commissioner has the authority to determine whether the employer has
36 good cause under this subsection.

37 (a) For the purposes of this subsection, "adequately" means
38 providing accurate information of sufficient quantity and quality
39 that would allow a reasonable person to determine eligibility for
40 benefits.

1 (b) (i) For the purposes of this subsection, "pattern" means a
2 benefit payment was made because the employer or employer's agent
3 failed to respond timely or adequately to a written request of the
4 department for information relating to a claim or claims without
5 establishing good cause for the failure, if the greater of the
6 following calculations for an employer is met:

7 (A) At least three times in the previous two years; or

8 (B) Twenty percent of the total current claims against the
9 employer.

10 (ii) If an employer's agent is utilized, a pattern is established
11 based on each individual client employer that the employer's agent
12 represents.

13 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** If any part of this act is found to be in
14 conflict with federal requirements that are a prescribed condition to
15 the allocation of federal funds to the state or the eligibility of
16 employers in this state for federal unemployment tax credits, the
17 conflicting part of this act is inoperative solely to the extent of
18 the conflict, and the finding or determination does not affect the
19 operation of the remainder of this act. Rules adopted under this act
20 must meet federal requirements that are a necessary condition to the
21 receipt of federal funds by the state or the granting of federal
22 unemployment tax credits to employers in this state.

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