

House Bill 2125

Sponsored by Representative NOSSE (Presession filed.)

SUMMARY

The following summary is not prepared by the sponsors of the measure and is not a part of the body thereof subject to consideration by the Legislative Assembly. It is an editor's brief statement of the essential features of the measure **as introduced**. The statement includes a measure digest written in compliance with applicable readability standards.

Digest: The Act would let the unpaid first week of an unemployment claim be waived for a worker who is away from work due to a severe weather emergency. (Flesch Readability Score: 60.5).

Authorizes the Director of the Employment Department to waive the unpaid waiting week period for unemployment insurance claimants who are unable to perform services due a state-declared emergency related to severe weather.

Takes effect on the 91st day following adjournment sine die.

A BILL FOR AN ACT

1
2 Relating to unemployment benefits for weather-related emergencies; creating new provisions;
3 amending ORS 657.155 and section 4, chapter 180, Oregon Laws 2023; repealing section 5,
4 chapter 43, Oregon Laws 2021; and prescribing an effective date.

5 **Be It Enacted by the People of the State of Oregon:**

6 **SECTION 1.** ORS 657.155 is amended to read:

7 657.155. (1) An unemployed individual shall be eligible to receive benefits with respect to any
8 week only if the Director of the Employment Department finds that **all of the following are true:**

9 (a)(A) The individual has registered for work [*at and thereafter has*], **and** continued to report,
10 at an employment office in accordance with such rules as the director may prescribe.

11 (B) [*However*] **Notwithstanding subparagraph (A) of this paragraph**, the director may, [*by*
12 *rule*] **under rules prescribed by the director**, waive or alter [*either or both of*] the requirements
13 of this [*subsection as to individuals attached to regular jobs and as to such other types of cases or*
14 *situations with respect to which*] **paragraph if** the director finds that compliance with [*such*] **the**
15 requirements would be oppressive[,] or [*would be*] inconsistent with the purposes of this chapter[;
16 *provided, that no such rule conflicts*]. **A rule prescribed pursuant to this subparagraph may not**
17 **conflict** with ORS 657.255.

18 (b) The individual has made a claim for benefits with respect to such week in accordance with
19 ORS 657.260.

20 (c) The individual is able to work, is available for work[,] and is actively seeking and unable to
21 obtain suitable work. No individual participating in a community work and training program, as
22 defined in ORS 411.855, shall, solely by reason [*thereof*] **of the participation**, be **considered** una-
23 vailable for work [*within the meaning*] **for purposes** of this section.

24 (d) The individual has been unemployed for a waiting period of one week, unless:

25 (A) The Governor has waived the required waiting period as provided in ORS 401.186[.]; **or**

26 (B) **The director, under rules prescribed by the director, has waived the waiting period**
27 **for individuals temporarily unable to perform services for the individuals' employers due to**
28 **an emergency declared under ORS 401.186 in response to severe weather.**

NOTE: Matter in **boldfaced** type in an amended section is new; matter [*italic and bracketed*] is existing law to be omitted.
New sections are in **boldfaced** type.

1 (e) The individual is not disqualified from benefits or ineligible for benefits under any other
2 section of this chapter.

3 (f) The individual is qualified for benefits under ORS 657.150.

4 (2)(a) An individual who leaves the individual's normal labor market area for the major portion
5 of any week is presumed to be unavailable for work [*within the meaning*] **for purposes** of this sec-
6 tion.

7 (b) The presumption described in paragraph (a) of this subsection may be overcome if the indi-
8 vidual establishes to the satisfaction of the director that the individual:

9 (A) Has conducted a bona fide search for work and has been reasonably accessible to suitable
10 work in the labor market area in which the individual spent the major portion of the week to which
11 the presumption applies; or

12 (B) Was required to be outside the individual's normal labor market area to apply for suitable
13 employment within the individual's normal labor market.

14 (3) The director shall [*either*], **in the manner provided in ORS 657.267 and 657.268**, promptly
15 allow credit or pay benefits for any week for which benefits are claimed or promptly give notice of
16 denial [*thereof in the manner provided in ORS 657.267 and 657.268*] **of the claim**.

17 **SECTION 2. The amendments to ORS 657.155 by section 1 of this 2025 Act apply to cal-**
18 **endar quarters as defined in ORS 657.010 that begin on or after January 1, 2026.**

19 **SECTION 3.** Section 4, chapter 180, Oregon Laws 2023, is amended to read:

20 **Sec. 4.** (1) If the United States Secretary of Labor serves notice that any provisions of [*ORS*
21 *657.221, as amended by section 1 of this 2023 Act, or rules adopted under ORS 657.221, as amended*
22 *by section 1 of this 2023 Act,*] **the statutes listed in subsection (2) of this section, or rules**
23 **adopted under the statutes**, fail to meet the requirements of the Social Security Act or the Federal
24 Unemployment Tax Act, the nonconforming provisions or rules shall no longer be of any force or
25 effect.

26 **(2) The statutes referred to in subsection (1) of this section are:**

27 **(a) ORS 657.010, as amended by section 1, chapter 43, Oregon Laws 2021.**

28 **(b) ORS 657.221, as amended by section 1, chapter 180, Oregon Laws 2023.**

29 **(c) ORS 657.155, as amended by section 1 of this 2025 Act.**

30 [(2)] (3) The Director of the Employment Department shall notify the Legislative Counsel as
31 soon as practicable after receipt of the notice described in subsection (1) of this section.

32 **SECTION 4. Section 5, chapter 43, Oregon Laws 2021, is repealed.**

33 **SECTION 5. This 2025 Act takes effect on the 91st day after the date on which the 2025**
34 **regular session of the Eighty-third Legislative Assembly adjourns sine die.**

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