



# SENATE BILL 116: Putting North Carolina Back to Work Act.

2021-2022 General Assembly

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<b>Committee:</b>		<b>Date:</b>	February 24, 2022
<b>Introduced by:</b>	Sens. Johnson, Sawyer, Britt	<b>Prepared by:</b>	Greg Roney Staff Attorney
<b>Analysis of:</b>	Ratified		

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**OVERVIEW:** *Senate Bill 116 would:*

- *Withdraw from the Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation program (FPUC) and the Mixed Earners Unemployment Compensation program (MEUC) that provide additional federal benefits to unemployment insurance claimants.*
- *If FPUC and MEUC programs end before August 14, 2021, appropriate \$250 million to the Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Child Development and Early Education, to subsidize child care for eligible children.*
- *Require claimants seeking unemployment insurance benefits to respond to employer interview requests:*
  - *Claimants must respond to interview requests by an employer offering suitable work within 48 hours using the contact information provided by the employer.*
  - *Claimants must schedule an interview with an employer within seven days of the interview request.*

*Senate Bill 116 was ratified by the General Assembly on June 24, 2021, and vetoed by the Governor on July 2, 2021.*

**CURRENT LAW AND BILL ANALYSIS:** Senate Bill 116 was vetoed by the Governor on July 2, 2021. Sections 1, 2, and 3 of the bill terminate the State's participation in federal programs that have now ended and, therefore, these sections could not become effective. Section 4 could become effective if the bill becomes law.

Section 1 of the bill would withdraw from the Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation program (FPUC) agreement that provides an additional \$300 per week to unemployment insurance claimants. The FPUC program has ended.

Section 1 of the bill would also withdraw from the Mixed Earner Unemployment Compensation (MEUC) agreement that provides an additional \$100 per week in supplemental benefits to individuals receiving certain unemployment insurance benefits who received at least \$5,000 of self-employment income in the most recent taxable year ending prior to the individual's application for regular unemployment compensation. The MEUC program has ended.

Section 2 of the bill would appropriate \$250 million from federal Child Care and Development Block Grant funds received under the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 to the Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Child Development and Early Education, to subsidize child care for eligible children if FPUC and MEUC programs end before August 14, 2021.

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Section 3 of the bill defines FPUC and MEUC.

Section 4 of the bill requires unemployment insurance claimants to make three job contacts per week (current law allows one job contact to be a reemployment activity offered by a local career center) and sets timelines for claimants to respond to employer interview requests as follows:

- Require claimants to respond to interview requests by an employer offering suitable work within 48 hours using the contact information provided by the employer.
- Require claimants to schedule an interview with an employer within seven days of the interview request, or outside of seven days if mutually agreed to by both parties.
- Require claimants to attend reemployment activities associated with the interview request if those activities are required by an employer in their normal course of recruitment.
- Permit employers to report to DES that a claimant has not responded to interview requests, refused to schedule an interview within seven days of the interview request, or failed to appear for a scheduled interview. DES would be required to audit reports submitted by employers.

The bill would disqualify a claimant for any remaining unemployment insurance benefit if the claimant fails, absent good cause, to do any of the following three or more times during a benefit year:

- Respond to an interview request within 48 hours.
- Schedule an interview with an employer within seven days of an interview request.
- Appear for a scheduled interview.
- Attend a reemployment activity associated with the interview request.

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** The bill was ratified by the General Assembly on June 24, 2021, and vetoed by the Governor on July 2, 2021. Sections 1, 2, and 3 could not become effective because the federal FPUC and MEUC programs have ended. Section 4 could become effective if the bill becomes law.