

HOUSE BILL No. 2353

AN ACT concerning the employment security laws; relating to domestic violence; amending K.S.A. 2002 Supp. 44-706 and repealing the existing section.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of the State of Kansas:

New Section 1. This act shall be known and may be cited as the employment security insurance act for domestic violence survivors.

New Sec. 2. As used in this act, unless the context clearly shows otherwise:

- (a) "Abuse" means:
 - (1) Causing or attempting to cause physical harm;
 - (2) placing another person in fear of imminent physical harm;
 - (3) causing another person to engage involuntarily in sexual relations by force, threats or duress, or threatening to do so;
 - (4) engaging in mental abuse, which includes threats, intimidation and acts designed to induce terror;
 - (5) depriving another person of health care, housing, food or other necessities of life; or
 - (6) restraining the liberty of another.
- (b) "Domestic violence" means abuse committed against an employee or an employee's spouse or dependent child by:
 - (1) A current or former spouse of the employee;
 - (2) a person with whom the employee shares parentage of a child in common;
 - (3) a person who is cohabitating with, or has cohabitated with, the employee;
 - (4) a person who is related by blood or marriage; or
 - (5) a person with whom the employee has or had a dating or engagement relationship.

New Sec. 3. The secretary of human resources shall implement a training curriculum for employees who will interact with claimants under the provisions of sections 1 through 6, and amendments thereto. Such curriculum shall be approved by the state domestic violence and sexual assault coalition designated by the center for disease control or health and human services.

New Sec. 4. No contributing employer or rated governmental employer's account shall be charged with respect to the benefits paid to a claimant who is eligible to receive employment security benefits due to domestic violence as set forth in K.S.A. 44-706, and amendments thereto.

New Sec. 5. This act shall be deemed part of and supplemental to the employment security law.

Sec. 6. K.S.A. 2002 Supp. 44-706 is hereby amended to read as follows: 44-706. An individual shall be disqualified for benefits:

(a) If the individual left work voluntarily without good cause attributable to the work or the employer, subject to the other provisions of this subsection (a). After a temporary job assignment, failure of an individual to affirmatively request an additional assignment on the next succeeding workday, if required by the employment agreement, after completion of a given work assignment, shall constitute leaving work voluntarily. The disqualification shall begin the day following the separation and shall continue until after the individual has become reemployed and has had earnings from insured work of at least three times the individual's weekly benefit amount. An individual shall not be disqualified under this subsection (a) if:

- (1) The individual was forced to leave work because of illness or injury upon the advice of a licensed and practicing health care provider and, upon learning of the necessity for absence, immediately notified the employer thereof, or the employer consented to the absence, and after recovery from the illness or injury, when recovery was certified by a practicing health care provider, the individual returned to the employer and offered to perform services and the individual's regular work or comparable and suitable work was not available; as used in this paragraph (1) "health care provider" means any person licensed by the proper licensing authority of any state to engage in the practice of medicine and surgery, osteopathy, chiropractic, dentistry, optometry, podiatry or psychology;
- (2) the individual left temporary work to return to the regular employer;
- (3) the individual left work to enlist in the armed forces of the United States, but was rejected or delayed from entry;

(4) the individual left work because of the voluntary or involuntary transfer of the individual's spouse from one job to another job, which is for the same employer or for a different employer, at a geographic location which makes it unreasonable for the individual to continue work at the individual's job;

(5) the individual left work because of hazardous working conditions; in determining whether or not working conditions are hazardous for an individual, the degree of risk involved to the individual's health, safety and morals, the individual's physical fitness and prior training and the working conditions of workers engaged in the same or similar work for the same and other employers in the locality shall be considered; as used in this paragraph (5), "hazardous working conditions" means working conditions that could result in a danger to the physical or mental well-being of the individual; each determination as to whether hazardous working conditions exist shall include, but shall not be limited to, a consideration of (A) the safety measures used or the lack thereof, and (B) the condition of equipment or lack of proper equipment; no work shall be considered hazardous if the working conditions surrounding the individual's work are the same or substantially the same as the working conditions generally prevailing among individuals performing the same or similar work for other employers engaged in the same or similar type of activity;

(6) the individual left work to enter training approved under section 236(a)(1) of the federal trade act of 1974, provided the work left is not of a substantially equal or higher skill level than the individual's past adversely affected employment (as defined for purposes of the federal trade act of 1974), and wages for such work are not less than 80% of the individual's average weekly wage as determined for the purposes of the federal trade act of 1974;

(7) the individual left work because of unwelcome harassment of the individual by the employer or another employee of which the employing unit had knowledge;

(8) the individual left work to accept better work; each determination as to whether or not the work accepted is better work shall include, but shall not be limited to, consideration of (A) the rate of pay, the hours of work and the probable permanency of the work left as compared to the work accepted, (B) the cost to the individual of getting to the work left in comparison to the cost of getting to the work accepted, and (C) the distance from the individual's place of residence to the work accepted in comparison to the distance from the individual's residence to the work left;

(9) the individual left work as a result of being instructed or requested by the employer, a supervisor or a fellow employee to perform a service or commit an act in the scope of official job duties which is in violation of an ordinance or statute;

(10) the individual left work because of a violation of the work agreement by the employing unit and, before the individual left, the individual had exhausted all remedies provided in such agreement for the settlement of disputes before terminating; ~~or~~

(11) after making reasonable efforts to preserve the work, the individual left work due to a personal emergency of such nature and compelling urgency that it would be contrary to good conscience to impose a disqualification; or

(12) *the individual left work due to circumstances resulting from domestic violence, including:*

(A) *The individual's reasonable fear of future domestic violence at or en route to or from the individual's place of employment; or*

(B) *the individual's need to relocate to another geographic area in order to avoid future domestic violence; or*

(C) *the individual's need to address the physical, psychological and legal impacts of domestic violence; or*

(D) *the individual's need to leave employment as a condition of receiving services or shelter from an agency which provides support services or shelter to victims of domestic violence; or*

(E) *the individual's reasonable belief that termination of employment is necessary to avoid other situations which may cause domestic violence and to provide for the future safety of the individual or the individual's family.*

(b) An individual may prove the existence of domestic violence by providing one of the following:

(1) A restraining order or other documentation of equitable relief by a court of competent jurisdiction; or

(2) a police record documenting the abuse; or

(3) documentation that the abuser has been convicted of one or more of the offenses enumerated in articles 34 and 35 of chapter 21 of the Kansas Statutes Annotated, and amendments thereto, where the victim was a family or household member; or

(4) medical documentation of the abuse; or

(5) a statement provided by a counselor, social worker, health care provider, clergy, shelter worker, legal advocate, domestic violence or sexual assault advocate or other professional who has assisted the individual in dealing with the effects of abuse on the individual or the individual's family; or

(6) a sworn statement from the individual attesting to the abuse.

(c) No evidence of domestic violence experienced by an individual, including the individual's statement and corroborating evidence, shall be disclosed by the department of human resources unless consent for disclosure is given by the individual.

~~(b)~~ (d) If the individual has been discharged for misconduct connected with the individual's work. The disqualification shall begin the day following the separation and shall continue until after the individual becomes reemployed and has had earnings from insured work of at least three times the individual's determined weekly benefit amount, except that if an individual is discharged for gross misconduct connected with the individual's work, such individual shall be disqualified for benefits until such individual again becomes employed and has had earnings from insured work of at least eight times such individual's determined weekly benefit amount. In addition, all wage credits attributable to the employment from which the individual was discharged for gross misconduct connected with the individual's work shall be canceled. No such cancellation of wage credits shall affect prior payments made as a result of a prior separation.

(1) For the purposes of this subsection ~~(b)~~ (d), "misconduct" is defined as a violation of a duty or obligation reasonably owed the employer as a condition of employment. The term "gross misconduct" as used in this subsection ~~(b)~~ (d) shall be construed to mean conduct evincing extreme, willful or wanton misconduct as defined by this subsection ~~(b)~~ (d).

(2) For the purposes of this subsection ~~(b)~~ (d), the use of or impairment caused by an alcoholic beverage, a cereal malt beverage or a nonprescribed controlled substance by an individual while working shall be conclusive evidence of misconduct and the possession of an alcoholic beverage, a cereal malt beverage or a nonprescribed controlled substance by an individual while working shall be prima facie evidence of conduct which is a violation of a duty or obligation reasonably owed to the employer as a condition of employment. For purposes of this subsection ~~(b)~~ (d), the disqualification of an individual from employment which disqualification is required by the provisions of the drug free workplace act, 41 U.S.C. 701 et seq. or is otherwise required by law because the individual refused to submit to or failed a chemical test which was required by law, shall be conclusive evidence of misconduct. Refusal to submit to a chemical test administered pursuant to an employee assistance program or other drug or alcohol treatment program in which the individual was participating voluntarily or as a condition of further employment shall also be conclusive evidence of misconduct. Alcoholic liquor shall be defined as provided in K.S.A. 41-102 and amendments thereto. Cereal malt beverage shall be defined as provided in K.S.A. 41-2701 and amendments thereto. Controlled substance shall be defined as provided in K.S.A. 65-4101 and amendments thereto of the uniform controlled substances act. As used in this subsection ~~(b)~~ (d)(2), "required by law" means required by a federal or state law, a federal or state rule or regulation having the force and effect of law, a county resolution or municipal ordinance, or a policy relating to public safety adopted in open meeting by the governing body of any special district or other local governmental entity. An individual's refusal to submit to a chemical test shall not be admissible evidence to prove misconduct unless the test is required by and meets the standards of the drug free workplace act, 41 U.S.C. 701 et seq., the test

was administered as part of an employee assistance program or other drug or alcohol treatment program in which the employee was participating voluntarily or as a condition of further employment, the test was otherwise required by law and the test constituted a required condition of employment for the individual's job, or, there was probable cause to believe that the individual used, possessed or was impaired by an alcoholic beverage, a cereal malt beverage or a controlled substance while working. The results of a chemical test shall not be admissible evidence to prove misconduct unless the following conditions were met:

(A) Either (i) the test was required by law, the test was administered pursuant to the drug free workplace act, 41 U.S.C. 701 et seq., (ii) the test was administered as part of an employee assistance program or other drug or alcohol treatment program in which the employee was participating voluntarily or as a condition of further employment, (iii) the test was required by law and the test constituted a required condition of employment for the individual's job, or (iv) there was probable cause to believe that the individual used, had possession of, or was impaired by the alcoholic beverage, the cereal malt beverage or the controlled substance while working;

(B) the test sample was collected either (i) as prescribed by the drug free workplace act, 41 U.S.C. 701 et seq., (ii) as prescribed by an employee assistance program or other drug or alcohol treatment program in which the employee was participating voluntarily or as a condition of further employment, (iii) as prescribed by a test which was required by law and which constituted a required condition of employment for the individual's job, or (iv) at a time contemporaneous with the events establishing probable cause;

(C) the collecting and labeling of the test sample was performed by a licensed health care professional or any other individual authorized to collect or label test samples by federal or state law, or a federal or state rule or regulation having the force and effect of law, including law enforcement personnel;

(D) the test was performed by a laboratory approved by the United States department of health and human services or licensed by the department of health and environment, except that a blood sample may be tested for alcohol content by a laboratory commonly used for that purpose by state law enforcement agencies;

(E) the test was confirmed by gas chromatography, gas chromatography-mass spectroscopy or other comparably reliable analytical method, except that no such confirmation is required for a blood alcohol sample; and

(F) the foundation evidence must establish, beyond a reasonable doubt, that the test results were from the sample taken from the individual.

(3) For the purposes of this subsection ~~(b)~~ (d), misconduct shall include, but not be limited to repeated absence, including lateness, from scheduled work if the facts show:

(A) The individual was absent without good cause;

(B) the absence was in violation of the employer's written absenteeism policy;

(C) the employer gave or sent written notice to the individual, at the individual's last known address, that future absence may or will result in discharge;

(D) the employee had knowledge of the employer's written absenteeism policy; and

(E) if an employee disputes being absent without good cause, the employee shall present evidence that a majority of the employee's absences were for good cause.

(4) An individual shall not be disqualified under this subsection ~~(b)~~ (d) if the individual is discharged under the following circumstances:

(A) The employer discharged the individual after learning the individual was seeking other work or when the individual gave notice of future intent to quit;

(B) the individual was making a good-faith effort to do the assigned work but was discharged due to: (i) Inefficiency, (ii) unsatisfactory performance due to inability, incapacity or lack of training or experience, (iii) isolated instances of ordinary negligence or inadvertence, (iv) good-faith

errors in judgment or discretion, or (v) unsatisfactory work or conduct due to circumstances beyond the individual's control; or

(C) the individual's refusal to perform work in excess of the contract of hire.

(c) If the individual has failed, without good cause, to either apply for suitable work when so directed by the employment office of the secretary of human resources, or to accept suitable work when offered to the individual by the employment office, the secretary of human resources, or an employer, such disqualification shall begin with the week in which such failure occurred and shall continue until the individual becomes reemployed and has had earnings from insured work of at least three times such individual's determined weekly benefit amount. In determining whether or not any work is suitable for an individual, the secretary of human resources, or a person or persons designated by the secretary, shall consider the degree of risk involved to health, safety and morals, physical fitness and prior training, experience and prior earnings, length of unemployment and prospects for securing local work in the individual's customary occupation or work for which the individual is reasonably fitted by training or experience, and the distance of the available work from the individual's residence. Notwithstanding any other provisions of this act, an otherwise eligible individual shall not be disqualified for refusing an offer of suitable employment, or failing to apply for suitable employment when notified by an employment office, or for leaving the individual's most recent work accepted during approved training, including training approved under section 236(a)(1) of the trade act of 1974, if the acceptance of or applying for suitable employment or continuing such work would require the individual to terminate approved training and no work shall be deemed suitable and benefits shall not be denied under this act to any otherwise eligible individual for refusing to accept new work under any of the following conditions: (1) If the position offered is vacant due directly to a strike, lockout or other labor dispute; (2) if the remuneration, hours or other conditions of the work offered are substantially less favorable to the individual than those prevailing for similar work in the locality; (3) if as a condition of being employed, the individual would be required to join or to resign from or refrain from joining any labor organization; (4) *if the individual left employment as a result of domestic violence, and the position offered does not reasonably accommodate the individual's physical, psychological, safety, and/or legal needs relating to said domestic violence.*

(d) For any week with respect to which the secretary of human resources, or a person or persons designated by the secretary, finds that the individual's unemployment is due to a stoppage of work which exists because of a labor dispute or there would have been a work stoppage had normal operations not been maintained with other personnel previously and currently employed by the same employer at the factory, establishment or other premises at which the individual is or was last employed, except that this subsection (d) shall not apply if it is shown to the satisfaction of the secretary of human resources, or a person or persons designated by the secretary, that: (1) The individual is not participating in or financing or directly interested in the labor dispute which caused the stoppage of work; and (2) the individual does not belong to a grade or class of workers of which, immediately before the commencement of the stoppage, there were members employed at the premises at which the stoppage occurs any of whom are participating in or financing or directly interested in the dispute. If in any case separate branches of work which are commonly conducted as separate businesses in separate premises are conducted in separate departments of the same premises, each such department shall, for the purpose of this subsection (d), be deemed to be a separate factory, establishment or other premises. For the purposes of this subsection (d), failure or refusal to cross a picket line or refusal for any reason during the continuance of such labor dispute to accept the individual's available and customary work at the factory, establishment or other premises where the individual is or was last employed shall be considered as participation and interest in the labor dispute.

(e) For any week with respect to which or a part of which the individual has received or is seeking unemployment benefits under the unemployment compensation law of any other state or of the United States, except that if the appropriate agency of such other state or the United

States finally determines that the individual is not entitled to such unemployment benefits, this disqualification shall not apply.

(f) For any week with respect to which the individual is entitled to receive any unemployment allowance or compensation granted by the United States under an act of congress to ex-service men and women in recognition of former service with the military or naval services of the United States.

(g) For the period of one year beginning with the first day following the last week of unemployment for which the individual received benefits, or for one year from the date the act was committed, whichever is the later, if the individual, or another in such individual's behalf with the knowledge of the individual, has knowingly made a false statement or representation, or has knowingly failed to disclose a material fact to obtain or increase benefits under this act or any other unemployment compensation law administered by the secretary of human resources.

(h) For any week with respect to which the individual is receiving compensation for temporary total disability or permanent total disability under the workmen's compensation law of any state or under a similar law of the United States.

(i) For any week of unemployment on the basis of service in an instructional, research or principal administrative capacity for an educational institution as defined in subsection (v) of K.S.A. 44-703 and amendments thereto, if such week begins during the period between two successive academic years or terms or, when an agreement provides instead for a similar period between two regular but not successive terms during such period or during a period of paid sabbatical leave provided for in the individual's contract, if the individual performs such services in the first of such academic years or terms and there is a contract or a reasonable assurance that such individual will perform services in any such capacity for any educational institution in the second of such academic years or terms.

(j) For any week of unemployment on the basis of service in any capacity other than service in an instructional, research, or administrative capacity in an educational institution, as defined in subsection (v) of K.S.A. 44-703 and amendments thereto, if such week begins during the period between two successive academic years or terms if the individual performs such services in the first of such academic years or terms and there is a reasonable assurance that the individual will perform such services in the second of such academic years or terms, except that if benefits are denied to the individual under this subsection (j) and the individual was not offered an opportunity to perform such services for the educational institution for the second of such academic years or terms, such individual shall be entitled to a retroactive payment of benefits for each week for which the individual filed a timely claim for benefits and for which benefits were denied solely by reason of this subsection (j).

(k) For any week of unemployment on the basis of service in any capacity for an educational institution as defined in subsection (v) of K.S.A. 44-703 and amendments thereto, if such week begins during an established and customary vacation period or holiday recess, if the individual performs services in the period immediately before such vacation period or holiday recess and there is a reasonable assurance that such individual will perform such services in the period immediately following such vacation period or holiday recess.

(l) For any week of unemployment on the basis of any services, substantially all of which consist of participating in sports or athletic events or training or preparing to so participate, if such week begins during the period between two successive sport seasons or similar period if such individual performed services in the first of such seasons or similar periods and there is a reasonable assurance that such individual will perform such services in the later of such seasons or similar periods.

(m) For any week on the basis of services performed by an alien unless such alien is an individual who was lawfully admitted for permanent residence at the time such services were performed, was lawfully present for purposes of performing such services, or was permanently residing in the United States under color of law at the time such services were performed, including an alien who was lawfully present in the United States as a result of the application of the provisions of section 212(d)(5) of the federal immigration and nationality act. Any data or in-

formation required of individuals applying for benefits to determine whether benefits are not payable to them because of their alien status shall be uniformly required from all applicants for benefits. In the case of an individual whose application for benefits would otherwise be approved, no determination that benefits to such individual are not payable because of such individual's alien status shall be made except upon a preponderance of the evidence.

(n) For any week in which an individual is receiving a governmental or other pension, retirement or retired pay, annuity or other similar periodic payment under a plan maintained by a base period employer and to which the entire contributions were provided by such employer, except that: (1) If the entire contributions to such plan were provided by the base period employer but such individual's weekly benefit amount exceeds such governmental or other pension, retirement or retired pay, annuity or other similar periodic payment attributable to such week, the weekly benefit amount payable to the individual shall be reduced (but not below zero) by an amount equal to the amount of such pension, retirement or retired pay, annuity or other similar periodic payment which is attributable to such week; or (2) if only a portion of contributions to such plan were provided by the base period employer, the weekly benefit amount payable to such individual for such week shall be reduced (but not below zero) by the prorated weekly amount of the pension, retirement or retired pay, annuity or other similar periodic payment after deduction of that portion of the pension, retirement or retired pay, annuity or other similar periodic payment that is directly attributable to the percentage of the contributions made to the plan by such individual; or (3) if the entire contributions to the plan were provided by such individual, or by the individual and an employer (or any person or organization) who is not a base period employer, no reduction in the weekly benefit amount payable to the individual for such week shall be made under this subsection (n); or (4) whatever portion of contributions to such plan were provided by the base period employer, if the services performed for the employer by such individual during the base period, or remuneration received for the services, did not affect the individual's eligibility for, or increased the amount of, such pension, retirement or retired pay, annuity or other similar periodic payment, no reduction in the weekly benefit amount payable to the individual for such week shall be made under this subsection (n). The conditions specified in clause (4) of this subsection (n) shall not apply to payments made under the social security act or the railroad retirement act of 1974, or the corresponding provisions of prior law. Payments made under these acts shall be treated as otherwise provided in this subsection (n). If the reduced weekly benefit amount is not a multiple of \$1, it shall be reduced to the next lower multiple of \$1.

(o) For any week of unemployment on the basis of services performed in any capacity and under any of the circumstances described in subsection (i), (j) or (k) which an individual performed in an educational institution while in the employ of an educational service agency. For the purposes of this subsection (o), the term "educational service agency" means a governmental agency or entity which is established and operated exclusively for the purpose of providing such services to one or more educational institutions.

(p) For any week of unemployment on the basis of service as a school bus or other motor vehicle driver employed by a private contractor to transport pupils, students and school personnel to or from school-related functions or activities for an educational institution, as defined in subsection (v) of K.S.A. 44-703 and amendments thereto, if such week begins during the period between two successive academic years or during a similar period between two regular terms, whether or not successive, if the individual has a contract or contracts, or a reasonable assurance thereof, to perform services in any such capacity with a private contractor for any educational institution for both such academic years or both such terms. An individual shall not be disqualified for benefits as provided in this subsection (p) for any week of unemployment on the basis of service as a bus or other motor vehicle driver employed by a private contractor to transport persons to or from nonschool-related functions or activities.

(q) For any week of unemployment on the basis of services performed by the individual in any capacity and under any of the circumstances described in subsection (i), (j), (k) or (o) which are provided to

or on behalf of an educational institution, as defined in subsection (v) of K.S.A. 44-703 and amendments thereto, while the individual is in the employ of an employer which is a governmental entity, Indian tribe or any employer described in section 501(c)(3) of the federal internal revenue code of 1986 which is exempt from income under section 501(a) of the code.

(r) For any week in which an individual is registered at and attending an established school, training facility or other educational institution, or is on vacation during or between two successive academic years or terms. An individual shall not be disqualified for benefits as provided in this subsection (r) provided:

(1) The individual was engaged in full-time employment concurrent with the individual's school attendance; or

(2) the individual is attending approved training as defined in subsection (s) of K.S.A. 44-703 and amendments thereto; or

(3) the individual is attending evening, weekend or limited day time classes, which would not affect availability for work, and is otherwise eligible under subsection (c) of K.S.A. 44-705 and amendments thereto.

(s) For any week with respect to which an individual is receiving or has received remuneration in the form of a back pay award or settlement. The remuneration shall be allocated to the week or weeks in the manner as specified in the award or agreement, or in the absence of such specificity in the award or agreement, such remuneration shall be allocated to the week or weeks in which such remuneration, in the judgment of the secretary, would have been paid.

(1) For any such weeks that an individual receives remuneration in the form of a back pay award or settlement, an overpayment will be established in the amount of unemployment benefits paid and shall be collected from the claimant.

(2) If an employer chooses to withhold from a back pay award or settlement, amounts paid to a claimant while they claimed unemployment benefits, such employer shall pay the department the amount withheld. With respect to such amount, the secretary shall have available all of the collection remedies authorized or provided in K.S.A. 44-717, and amendments thereto.

Sec. 7. K.S.A. 2002 Supp. 44-706 is hereby repealed.

Sec. 8. This act shall take effect and be in force from and after its publication in the statute book.