

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION No. 1616

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION urging the Governor of the State of Kansas to end Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation to ensure that businesses do not have to compete with the federal government in attempts to fill thousands of open positions.

WHEREAS, Kansas continues to operate three federal pandemic-related unemployment programs, including weekly Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation, in addition to benefits provided by the state's traditional unemployment insurance program, with the original justification for these expansions being that individuals needed additional benefits because of the COVID-19 pandemic, and those individuals could not work; and

WHEREAS, The economy of the State of Kansas has now dramatically recovered from the COVID-19 pandemic as evidenced by the 3.5 % unemployment rate, which is lower than the state's average unemployment rate from 2016 to 2019, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, and at least 73,000 open jobs are currently available in the state; and

WHEREAS, Employers are struggling to find workers to fill these jobs as a result of the disincentive created by government benefits that, including unemployment benefits, currently total \$44,756 on an annualized basis, while the median wage in Kansas is \$38,667; and

WHEREAS, In 2019, the maximum allowed duration of unemployment benefits was 16 weeks, while the Kansas Department of Labor reports that individuals can now receive unemployment benefits for up to 79 weeks; and

WHEREAS, Governor Kelly's administration has instructed Kansas unemployment recipients to answer "yes" when asked if they looked for work, even if they have not looked for work, discouraging employment while promoting deceptive conduct; and

WHEREAS, Fraud is now pervasive in the unemployment compensation program as a result of program expansions, with one in four claims being identified or reported as fraudulent in 2020 according to the Kansas Legislative Division of Post Audit, resulting in Kansas paying out more than \$600 million in fraudulent claims this past year; and

WHEREAS, It is well within this state's prerogative to end its participation in federal pandemic-related unemployment programs, with appropriate notice to the U.S. Department of Labor, as 23 other states have done as of May 26, 2021: Now, therefore,

*Be it resolved by the Senate of the State of Kansas, the House of Representatives concurring therein:* That the State of Kansas urges the Governor of the State of Kansas to help Kansas businesses attract and retain the employees they desperately need, spur further economic recovery and growth in Kansas and immediately give formal notice to the U.S. Department of Labor that Kansas will be withdrawing from participation in all federal pandemic-related unemployment benefits programs; and

*Be it further resolved:* That the Secretary of State shall send an enrolled copy of this resolution to the chairperson of the Legislative Coordinating Council.

I hereby certify that the above CONCURRENT RESOLUTION originated in the SENATE, and was adopted by that body

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*President of the Senate.*

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*Secretary of the Senate.*

Adopted by the HOUSE \_\_\_\_\_

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*Speaker of the House.*

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*Chief Clerk of the House.*