ASSEMBLY LABOR COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

SENATE, No. 2396

with committee amendments

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: OCTOBER 17, 2022

The Assembly Labor Committee reports favorably and with committee amendments Senate Bill No. 2396.

As amended, this bill directs the Commissioner of the Department of Labor and Workforce Development to issue annual reports regarding department performance in providing timely and accurate processing of, and adjudicating appeals concerning, unemployment compensation benefit claims. The bill requires the report to include:

1. Information about the number and cost of personnel employed in the administration of the unemployment insurance system;

2. Information regarding appropriations for the system during the fiscal year in which the report is made and the preceding fiscal year, and any unexpended moneys available for the system;

3. If an acceptable level of performance was not attained, performance was substantially below the national average, or there are other significant problems in the administration of the system, the report shall provide an evaluation of the causes of the deficiencies and a plan to correct them.

That plan shall include:

1. Any staffing increase needed to process claims, appeals, and benefit payments expeditiously and accurately;

2. Measures needed to enforce notification and reporting requirements;

3. Measures needed to inform employers and employees of their responsibilities to facilitate the timely provision of benefits;

4. Improvements needed in data processing, telephone and other communications technology, staff training, and other administrative services and equipment;

5. Measures needed to improve service to claimants, including implementing user-friendly application processes, facilitating rapid response times to inquiries and applications, and providing easy access to personal assistance as needed; and

6. Any other measures appropriate for a full modernization of the administration of all aspects of the system.

The plan shall include the provisions of any applicable corrective action plan which is included in an Unemployment Insurance State Quality Service Plan (SQSP) approved by the USDOL, but may also

provide for measures not included in an SQSP to attain more rapid improvements in performance the SQSP and provide for greater commitments of resources to attain its goals, including expenditures of funds held in reserve or other unexpended funds, and funding from non-federal sources, including the Unemployment Compensation Auxiliary Fund. The commissioner is directed to include any proposals of the report for greater commitments of resources in the commissioner's budget requests for the fiscal year following the issuing of the report.

The amendments make this bill identical Assembly Bill No. 3810 (1R) of the 2022-2023 Legislative Session.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS:

The committee amended the bill to:

(1) remove the requirement to report:

(a) data regarding the State's performance levels during the last four completed calendar quarters on all of the core measures of the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) regarding the timeliness and quality of first payments of benefits, benefit determinations, and lower and higher authority appeals; and

(b) data regarding whether, for each core measure, the State has attained acceptable levels of performance under USDOL standards, and how the State's performance compares to the national average; and

(2) delay the requirement to begin reporting from November 30, 2022 to November 30, 2023.

The amendments make this bill identical Assembly Bill No. 3810 (1R) of the 2022-2023 Legislative Session.