

[First Reprint]

**SENATE, No. 1046**

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**STATE OF NEW JERSEY**  
**218th LEGISLATURE**

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INTRODUCED JANUARY 22, 2018

**Sponsored by:**

**Senator JOSEPH F. VITALE**

**District 19 (Middlesex)**

**Senator VIN GOPAL**

**District 11 (Monmouth)**

**Co-Sponsored by:**

**Senator Greenstein**

**SYNOPSIS**

Concerns unemployment compensation and labor disputes.

**CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT**

As reported by the Senate Labor Committee on June 11, 2018, with amendments.



**(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 6/26/2018)**

1 AN ACT concerning unemployment compensation and labor  
2 disputes and amending R.S.43:21-5.

3

4 **BE IT ENACTED** by the Senate and General Assembly of the State  
5 of New Jersey:

6

7 1. R.S.43:21-5 is amended to read as follows:

8 43:21-5. An individual shall be disqualified for benefits:

9 (a) For the week in which the individual has left work  
10 voluntarily without good cause attributable to such work, and for  
11 each week thereafter until the individual becomes reemployed and  
12 works eight weeks in employment, which may include employment  
13 for the federal government, and has earned in employment at least  
14 ten times the individual's weekly benefit rate, as determined in each  
15 case. This subsection shall apply to any individual seeking  
16 unemployment benefits on the basis of employment in the  
17 production and harvesting of agricultural crops, including any  
18 individual who was employed in the production and harvesting of  
19 agricultural crops on a contract basis and who has refused an offer  
20 of continuing work with that employer following the completion of  
21 the minimum period of work required to fulfill the contract. This  
22 subsection shall not apply to an individual who voluntarily leaves  
23 work with one employer to accept from another employer  
24 employment which commences not more than seven days after the  
25 individual leaves employment with the first employer, if the  
26 employment with the second employer has weekly hours or pay not  
27 less than the hours or pay of the employment of the first employer,  
28 except that if the individual gives notice to the first employer that  
29 the individual will leave employment on a specified date and the  
30 first employer terminates the individual before that date, the seven-  
31 day period will commence from the specified date.

32 (b) For the week in which the individual has been suspended or  
33 discharged for misconduct connected with the work, and for the  
34 seven weeks which immediately follow that week, as determined in  
35 each case.

36 For the week in which the individual has been suspended or  
37 discharged for severe misconduct connected with the work, and for  
38 each week thereafter until the individual becomes reemployed and  
39 works four weeks in employment, which may include employment  
40 for the federal government, and has earned in employment at least  
41 six times the individual's weekly benefit rate, as determined in each  
42 case. Examples of severe misconduct include, but are not  
43 necessarily limited to, the following: repeated violations of an  
44 employer's rule or policy, repeated lateness or absences after a  
45 written warning by an employer, falsification of records, physical

**EXPLANATION** – Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets **[thus]** in the above bill is not enacted and is intended to be omitted in the law.

Matter underlined thus is new matter.

Matter enclosed in superscript numerals has been adopted as follows:

<sup>1</sup>Senate SLA committee amendments adopted June 11, 2018.

1 assault or threats that do not constitute gross misconduct as defined  
2 in this section, misuse of benefits, misuse of sick time, abuse of  
3 leave, theft of company property, excessive use of intoxicants or  
4 drugs on work premises, theft of time, or where the behavior is  
5 malicious and deliberate but is not considered gross misconduct as  
6 defined in this section.

7 In the event the discharge should be rescinded by the employer  
8 voluntarily or as a result of mediation or arbitration, this subsection  
9 (b) shall not apply, provided, however, an individual who is  
10 restored to employment with back pay shall return any benefits  
11 received under this chapter for any week of unemployment for  
12 which the individual is subsequently compensated by the employer.

13 If the discharge was for gross misconduct connected with the  
14 work because of the commission of an act punishable as a crime of  
15 the first, second, third or fourth degree under the "New Jersey Code  
16 of Criminal Justice," N.J.S.2C:1-1 et seq., the individual shall be  
17 disqualified in accordance with the disqualification prescribed in  
18 subsection (a) of this section and no benefit rights shall accrue to  
19 any individual based upon wages from that employer for services  
20 rendered prior to the day upon which the individual was discharged.

21 The director shall insure that any appeal of a determination  
22 holding the individual disqualified for gross misconduct in  
23 connection with the work shall be expeditiously processed by the  
24 appeal tribunal.

25 (c) If it is found that the individual has failed, without good  
26 cause, either to apply for available, suitable work when so directed  
27 by the employment office or the director or to accept suitable work  
28 when it is offered, or to return to the individual's customary self-  
29 employment (if any) when so directed by the director. The  
30 disqualification shall continue for the week in which the failure  
31 occurred and for the three weeks which immediately follow that  
32 week, as determined:

33 (1) In determining whether or not any work is suitable for an  
34 individual, consideration shall be given to the degree of risk  
35 involved to health, safety, and morals, the individual's physical  
36 fitness and prior training, experience and prior earnings, the  
37 individual's length of unemployment and prospects for securing  
38 local work in the individual's customary occupation, and the  
39 distance of the available work from the individual's residence. In  
40 the case of work in the production and harvesting of agricultural  
41 crops, the work shall be deemed to be suitable without regard to the  
42 distance of the available work from the individual's residence if all  
43 costs of transportation are provided to the individual and the terms  
44 and conditions of hire are as favorable or more favorable to the  
45 individual as the terms and conditions of the individual's base year  
46 employment.

47 (2) Notwithstanding any other provisions of this chapter, no  
48 work shall be deemed suitable and benefits shall not be denied

1 under this chapter to any otherwise eligible individual for refusing  
2 to accept new work under any of the following conditions: the  
3 position offered is vacant due directly to a strike, lockout, or other  
4 labor dispute; the remuneration, hours, or other conditions of the  
5 work offered are substantially less favorable to the individual than  
6 those prevailing for similar work in the locality; or, the individual,  
7 as a condition of being employed, would be required to join a  
8 company union or to resign from or refrain from joining any bona  
9 fide labor organization.

10 (d) If it is found that this unemployment is due to a stoppage of  
11 work which exists because of a labor dispute at the factory,  
12 establishment or other premises at which the individual is or was  
13 last employed, except as otherwise provided by this subsection (d).

14 (1) No disqualification under this subsection (d) shall apply if it  
15 is shown that:

16 (a) The individual is not participating in or financing or directly  
17 interested in the labor dispute which caused the stoppage of work;  
18 and

19 (b) The individual does not belong to a grade or class of workers  
20 of which, immediately before the commencement of the stoppage,  
21 there were members employed at the premises at which the  
22 stoppage occurs, any of whom are participating in or financing or  
23 directly interested in the dispute; provided that if in any case in  
24 which (a) or (b) above applies, separate branches of work which are  
25 commonly conducted as separate businesses in separate premises  
26 are conducted in separate departments of the same premises, each  
27 department shall, for the purpose of this subsection, be deemed to  
28 be a separate factory, establishment, or other premises.

29 (2) For any claim for a period of unemployment commencing on  
30 or after December 1, 2004, no disqualification under this subsection  
31 (d) shall apply if it is shown that the individual has been prevented  
32 from working by the employer, even though the individual's  
33 recognized or certified majority representative has directed the  
34 employees in the individual's collective bargaining unit to work  
35 under the preexisting terms and conditions of employment, and the  
36 employees had not engaged in a strike immediately before being  
37 prevented from working.

38 (3) For any claim for a period of unemployment commencing on  
39 or after <sup>1</sup>【April 10, 2016】 July 1, 2018<sup>1</sup>, no disqualification under  
40 this subsection (d) shall apply if the labor dispute is caused by the  
41 failure or refusal of the employer to comply with an agreement or  
42 contract between the employer and the claimant, including a  
43 collective bargaining agreement with a union representing the  
44 claimant, or a State or federal law pertaining to hours, wages, or  
45 other conditions of work.

46 (4) For any claim for a period of unemployment commencing on  
47 or after <sup>1</sup>【April 10, 2016】 July 1, 2018<sup>1</sup>, if the unemployment is  
48 caused by a labor dispute, including a strike or other concerted

1 activities of employees at the claimant's workplace, whether or not  
2 authorized or sanctioned by a union representing the claimant, but  
3 not including a dispute subject to the provisions of paragraphs (2)  
4 or (3) of this subsection (d), the claimant shall not be provided  
5 benefits for a period of the first 30 days following the  
6 commencement of the unemployment caused by the labor dispute,  
7 except that the period without benefits shall not apply if the  
8 employer hires a permanent replacement worker for the claimant's  
9 position. A replacement worker shall be presumed to be permanent  
10 unless the employer certifies in writing that the claimant will be  
11 permitted to return to his or her prior position upon conclusion of  
12 the dispute. If the employer does not permit the return, the claimant  
13 shall be entitled to recover any benefits lost as a result of the 30 day  
14 waiting period before receiving benefits, and the department may  
15 impose a penalty upon the employer of up to \$750 per employee per  
16 week of benefits lost. The penalty collected shall be paid into the  
17 unemployment compensation auxiliary fund established pursuant to  
18 subsection (g) of R.S.43:21-14.

19 (e) For any week with respect to which the individual is  
20 receiving or has received remuneration in lieu of notice.

21 (f) For any week with respect to which or a part of which the  
22 individual has received or is seeking unemployment benefits under  
23 an unemployment compensation law of any other state or of the  
24 United States; provided that if the appropriate agency of the other  
25 state or of the United States finally determines that the individual is  
26 not entitled to unemployment benefits, this disqualification shall not  
27 apply.

28 (g) (1) For a period of one year from the date of the discovery  
29 by the division of the illegal receipt or attempted receipt of benefits  
30 contrary to the provisions of this chapter, as the result of any false  
31 or fraudulent representation; provided that any disqualification may  
32 be appealed in the same manner as any other disqualification  
33 imposed hereunder; and provided further that a conviction in the  
34 courts of this State arising out of the illegal receipt or attempted  
35 receipt of these benefits in any proceeding instituted against the  
36 individual under the provisions of this chapter or any other law of  
37 this State shall be conclusive upon the appeals tribunal and the  
38 board of review.

39 (2) A disqualification under this subsection shall not preclude  
40 the prosecution of any civil, criminal or administrative action or  
41 proceeding to enforce other provisions of this chapter for the  
42 assessment and collection of penalties or the refund of any amounts  
43 collected as benefits under the provisions of R.S.43:21-16, or to  
44 enforce any other law, where an individual obtains or attempts to  
45 obtain by theft or robbery or false statements or representations any  
46 money from any fund created or established under this chapter or  
47 any negotiable or nonnegotiable instrument for the payment of  
48 money from these funds, or to recover money erroneously or

1 illegally obtained by an individual from any fund created or  
2 established under this chapter.

3 (h) (1) Notwithstanding any other provisions of this chapter  
4 (R.S.43:21-1 et seq.), no otherwise eligible individual shall be  
5 denied benefits for any week because the individual is in training  
6 approved under section 236(a)(1) of the "Trade Act of 1974,"  
7 Pub.L.93-618 (19 U.S.C. s.2296 (a)(1)) nor shall the individual be  
8 denied benefits by reason of leaving work to enter this training,  
9 provided the work left is not suitable employment, or because of the  
10 application to any week in training of provisions in this chapter  
11 (R.S.43:21-1 et seq.), or any applicable federal unemployment  
12 compensation law, relating to availability for work, active search  
13 for work, or refusal to accept work.

14 (2) For purposes of this subsection (h), the term "suitable"  
15 employment means, with respect to an individual, work of a  
16 substantially equal or higher skill level than the individual's past  
17 adversely affected employment, as defined for purposes of the  
18 "Trade Act of 1974," Pub.L.93-618 (19 U.S.C. s.2101 et seq.) and  
19 wages for this work at not less than 80% of the individual's average  
20 weekly wage, as determined for the purposes of the "Trade Act of  
21 1974."

22 (i) For benefit years commencing after June 30, 1984, for any  
23 week in which the individual is a student in full attendance at, or on  
24 vacation from, an educational institution, as defined in subsection  
25 (y) of R.S.43:21-19; except that this subsection shall not apply to  
26 any individual attending a training program approved by the  
27 division to enhance the individual's employment opportunities, as  
28 defined under subsection (c) of R.S.43:21-4; nor shall this  
29 subsection apply to any individual who, during the individual's base  
30 year, earned sufficient wages, as defined under subsection (e) of  
31 R.S.43:21-4, while attending an educational institution during  
32 periods other than established and customary vacation periods or  
33 holiday recesses at the educational institution, to establish a claim  
34 for benefits. For purposes of this subsection, an individual shall be  
35 treated as a full-time student for any period:

36 (1) During which the individual is enrolled as a full-time student  
37 at an educational institution, or

38 (2) Which is between academic years or terms, if the individual  
39 was enrolled as a full-time student at an educational institution for  
40 the immediately preceding academic year or term.

41 (j) Notwithstanding any other provisions of this chapter  
42 (R.S.43:21-1 et seq.), no otherwise eligible individual shall be  
43 denied benefits because the individual left work or was discharged  
44 due to circumstances resulting from the individual being a victim of  
45 domestic violence as defined in section 3 of P.L.1991, c.261  
46 (C.2C:25-19). No employer's account shall be charged for the  
47 payment of benefits to an individual who left work due to

1 circumstances resulting from the individual being a victim of  
2 domestic violence.

3 For the purposes of this subsection (j), the individual shall be  
4 treated as being a victim of domestic violence if the individual  
5 provides one or more of the following:

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

8 (2) A police record documenting the domestic violence;

9 (3) Documentation that the perpetrator of the domestic violence  
10 has been convicted of one or more of the offenses enumerated in  
11 section 3 of P.L.1991, c.261 (C.2C:25-19);

12 (4) Medical documentation of the domestic violence;

13 (5) Certification from a certified Domestic Violence Specialist  
14 or the director of a designated domestic violence agency that the  
15 individual is a victim of domestic violence; or

16 (6) Other documentation or certification of the domestic  
17 violence provided by a social worker, member of the clergy, shelter  
18 worker or other professional who has assisted the individual in  
19 dealing with the domestic violence.

20 For the purposes of this subsection (j):

21 "Certified Domestic Violence Specialist" means a person who  
22 has fulfilled the requirements of certification as a Domestic  
23 Violence Specialist established by the New Jersey Association of  
24 Domestic Violence Professionals; and "designated domestic  
25 violence agency" means a county-wide organization with a primary  
26 purpose to provide services to victims of domestic violence, and  
27 which provides services that conform to the core domestic violence  
28 services profile as defined by the Division of Youth and Family  
29 Services in the Department of Children and Families and is under  
30 contract with the division for the express purpose of providing such  
31 services.

32 (k) Notwithstanding any other provisions of this chapter  
33 (R.S.43:21-1 et seq.), no otherwise eligible individual shall be  
34 denied benefits for any week in which the individual left work  
35 voluntarily and without good cause attributable to the work, if the  
36 individual left work to accompany his or her spouse who is an  
37 active member of the United States Armed Forces, as defined in  
38 N.J.S.38A:1-1(g), to a new place of residence outside the State, due  
39 to the armed forces member's transfer to a new assignment in a  
40 different geographical location outside the State, and the individual  
41 moves to the new place of residence not more than nine months  
42 after the spouse is transferred, and upon arrival at the new place of  
43 residence the individual was in all respects available for suitable  
44 work. No employer's account shall be charged for the payment of  
45 benefits to an individual who left work under the circumstances  
46 contained in this subsection (k), except that this shall not be  
47 construed as relieving the State of New Jersey and any other  
48 governmental entity or instrumentality or nonprofit organization

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1 electing or required to make payments in lieu of contributions from  
2 its responsibility to make all benefit payments otherwise required  
3 by law and from being charged for those benefits as otherwise  
4 required by law.

5 (cf: P.L.2015, c.41, s.1)

6

7 2. This act shall take effect immediately.