ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION No. 253

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED MAY 17, 2021

Sponsored by:
Assemblywoman AURA K. DUNN
District 25 (Morris and Somerset)

SYNOPSIS

Urges Governor to resume in-person services at DOLWD.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.

AN ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION urging the Governor to resume in-person services at DOLWD.

WHEREAS, In-person services at the Department of Labor and Workforce Development (DOLWD) have been closed since March of 2020; and

WHEREAS, Many New Jersey residents require access to the DOLWD's services as a result of the business closures in response to the coronavirus disease 2019 pandemic (COVID-19) and the resulting surge in unemployment; and

WHEREAS, Although many of the DOLWD's services are provided over the internet or the telephone, these services may not be as accessible for elderly clients, low-income clients, or clients with disabilities; and

WHEREAS, The State's total numbers of COVID-19 new cases and fatalities are decreasing, leading to a safer indoor work environment; and

WHEREAS, According to a press release by the Governor's office, indoor capacity limits are scheduled to be raised on May 19th if there is no surge in cases prior to that date; and

WHEREAS, New Jersey's unemployment rate as of March 2021 was still 7.7 percent, and the State has only recovered 54 percent of the jobs lost in March and April of 2020 as a result of COVID-19-related shutdowns; and

WHEREAS, A resumption of in-person services at many of the department's divisions and agencies, including a resumption of in-person unemployment claim filings and a resumption of in-person services at One-Stop Career Centers, is in the best interests of the clientele that the DOLWD is designed to serve; and

WHEREAS, A resumption of in-person services at the Division of Unemployment Insurance would allow claimants who are victims of programming and technological glitches to more effectively redress their problems and receive their claims; and

WHEREAS, A resumption of in-person services would allow more effective communication with unemployment claimants who have been victims of programming and technological glitches; and

WHEREAS, In addition, all DOLWD facilities should be fully staffed, regardless of their staffing levels prior to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED *by the General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:*

1. The General Assembly of the State of New Jersey urges the Governor to safely resume in-person services at the Department of Labor and Workforce Development.

2. The General Assembly of the State of New Jersey urges the Department of Labor and Workforce Development to fully staff all public-facing offices at all times.

3. Copies of this resolution, as filed with the Secretary of State, shall be transmitted by the Clerk of the General Assembly to the Governor, the Lieutenant Governor, and the Commissioner of Labor and Workforce Development.

STATEMENT

This Assembly Resolution urges the Governor to safely resume in-person services at the Department of Labor and Workforce Development.

In-person services at the Department of Labor and Workforce Development have been closed since March of 2020. New Jersey's unemployment rate as of March 2021 was still 7.7 percent, and the State has only recovered 54 percent of the jobs lost in March and April of 2020 as a result of coronavirus disease 2019 pandemic-related shutdowns, meaning that many New Jersey residents require access to the Department of Labor and Workforce Development's services. Although many of the Department of Labor and Workforce Development's services are provided over the internet or the telephone, these services may not be as accessible for elderly clients, low-income clients, or clients with disabilities.

The State's numbers of new cases of COVID-19 and number of COVID-19 fatalities are decreasing, leading to a safer indoor work environment, and indoor capacity limits are scheduled to be raised on May 19th if there is no surge in cases prior to that date. A resumption of in-person services at many of the Department's agencies, including a resumption of in-person unemployment claim filings and a resumption of in-person services at One-Stop Career Centers, is in the best interests of the clientele that the Department of Labor and Workforce Development is designed to serve. Additionally, a resumption of in-person services at the Division of Unemployment Insurance would allow claimants who are victims of programming and technological glitches to more effectively redress their problems and receive their claims, and would allow the Division of Unemployment and other agencies to more effectively communicate with these victims.

This resolution additionally calls for the Department of Labor and Workforce Development to fully staff all public-facing offices at all times.