

SENATE RESOLUTION No. 133

STATE OF NEW JERSEY 219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED JUNE 10, 2021

Sponsored by:

Senator ANTHONY M. BUCCO

District 25 (Morris and Somerset)

Senator MICHAEL L. TESTA, JR.

District 1 (Atlantic, Cape May and Cumberland)

SYNOPSIS

Urges Governor to resume in-person services at DOLWD.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



1 **A SENATE RESOLUTION** urging the Governor to resume in-person
2 services at DOLWD.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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41 **BE IT RESOLVED** *by the Senate of the State of New Jersey:*

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43 1. The Senate of the State of New Jersey urges the Governor to
44 safely resume in-person services at the Department of Labor and
45 Workforce Development.

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

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5 3. Copies of this resolution, as filed with the Secretary of State,
6 shall be transmitted by the Secretary of the Senate to the Governor,
7 the Lieutenant Governor, and the Commissioner of Labor and
8 Workforce Development.

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STATEMENT

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

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

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

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