

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2009

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HOUSE BILL 1278
Committee Substitute Favorable 5/7/09

Short Title: High Unemployment Triggers State Response.

(Public)

Sponsors:

Referred to:

April 9, 2009

1 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
2 AN ACT PROVIDING FOR A STATE GOVERNMENT EMERGENCY RESPONSE TO
3 HIGH UNEMPLOYMENT IN A COUNTY WHENEVER THE COUNTY'S
4 UNEMPLOYMENT RATE EXCEEDS FIFTEEN AND FIVE-TENTHS PERCENT FOR
5 TWO CONSECUTIVE MONTHS.

6 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

7 **SECTION 1.** Response Team. – There is established the Interagency Emergency
8 Response Team for High Unemployment Areas (Response Team). The State entities on the
9 Response Team, whose missions span the areas of economic development, job creation,
10 workforce training and development, employment services, public assistance, education, public
11 health, and public safety, shall make an emergency response in any county in the State
12 whenever a local area unemployment statistic for a county (based on unadjusted data) exceeds
13 fifteen and five-tenths percent (15.5%) for two consecutive months.

14 The participating State entities on the Response Team include:

- 15 (1) Department of Administration.
- 16 (2) Department of Commerce.
- 17 (3) Department of Crime Control and Public Safety.
- 18 (4) Department of Health and Human Services.
- 19 (5) Department of Insurance.
- 20 (6) Department of Labor.
- 21 (7) Department of Public Instruction.
- 22 (8) Department of Transportation.
- 23 (9) Employment Security Commission.
- 24 (10) The University of North Carolina.
- 25 (11) North Carolina Community College System.

26 The Secretary of Commerce, the Secretary of Health and Human Services, and the
27 Deputy Chairman and Chief Operations Officer of the Employment Security Commission shall
28 act cooperatively as the Executive Committee leading the Response Team. All policy, strategic,
29 and tactical decisions of the Executive Committee shall be made by majority vote. Each
30 participating State entity shall be represented by at least two high-level employees designated
31 by the head of the entity, each of whom must have the authority to activate and coordinate the
32 entity's high unemployment emergency response pursuant to this act. With the approval of the
33 Governor, the Executive Committee has the power to request, and shall receive immediately,
34 from all officers, agents, and departments of the executive branch of State government any
35 information ascertainable, or within their possession, and any assistance within their power.

36 The Executive Committee shall consult with the Governor to provide
37 recommendations concerning the issuance of executive orders by the Governor, as requested.



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1 The Department of Administration shall provide lead support assistance to the Response Team
2 as requested by the Executive Committee.

3 **SECTION 2.** High Unemployment Trigger/Action. – The Deputy Chairman and
4 Chief Operations Officer of the Employment Security Commission shall monitor continually
5 the unemployment rates throughout the State and shall notify the other members of the
6 Executive Committee whenever a local area unemployment statistic for a county (based on
7 unadjusted data) exceeds fifteen and five-tenths percent (15.5%) for two consecutive months so
8 that the Response Team may be activated immediately.

9 At the direction of the Executive Committee, the Response Team shall take all
10 coordinated actions within the power of the respective participating State entities necessary to:

- 11 (1) Alleviate the extraordinary burden of high unemployment by simplifying
12 and expediting, to the fullest extent allowed by law, applications for
13 unemployment compensation, public assistance, and other needed services.
- 14 (2) Intensify economic development and job creation activities in the county and
15 the surrounding area.
- 16 (3) Educate the citizens of the county about available retraining and educational
17 opportunities in the region and simplify access to those resources.
- 18 (4) Obtain the assistance of available federal government resources for the
19 benefit of the affected citizens of the county.
- 20 (5) Open additional temporary offices of the participating entities in the county,
21 as needed.
- 22 (6) Offer additional education and training opportunities in the county, as
23 appropriate.
- 24 (7) Provide assistance to local law enforcement and crime prevention agencies
25 as requested by those local agencies having jurisdiction.
- 26 (8) Provide assistance to municipal and county governments, as appropriate.
- 27 (9) Engage in any other lawful activity that lessens the adverse effect of, or
28 enhances the State's response to, a high unemployment emergency.

29 **SECTION 3.** Suspending the Response. – When a local area unemployment
30 statistic for the county (based on unadjusted data) drops to or below fifteen and five-tenths
31 percent (15.5%), and remains at or below that level for three consecutive months, then the
32 Response Team shall suspend its response in the county unless the Executive Committee
33 determines, with the approval of the Governor, that a continued post-emergency response is
34 warranted. In that case, the Executive Committee may continue with an appropriate
35 post-emergency response in that county for up to six months.

36 **SECTION 4.** Reporting. – Beginning January 1, 2010, and annually thereafter, the
37 Executive Committee shall report to the Governor and to the General Assembly on Response
38 Team actions during the previous year and may recommend legislative proposals related to
39 State and local government responses to high unemployment emergencies.

40 **SECTION 5.** Effective Date. – This act is effective when it becomes law.