

House Bill 500

By: Representatives Pruett of the 144<sup>th</sup>, England of the 108<sup>th</sup>, Hembree of the 67<sup>th</sup>, Harden of the 28<sup>th</sup>, Carter of the 175<sup>th</sup>, and others

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED  
AN ACT

1 To amend Article 7 of Chapter 8 of Title 34 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated,  
2 relating to unemployment compensation benefits, so as to establish the Employment  
3 Readiness Program for Georgia's unemployed; to provide for the administration of the  
4 program by the Department of Labor; to provide for participation in the Employment  
5 Readiness Program by persons receiving extended unemployment compensation benefits;  
6 to provide for related matters; to provide for an effective date and applicability; to repeal  
7 conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

8 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

9 style="text-align:center">**SECTION 1.**

10 Article 7 of Chapter 8 of Title 34 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to  
11 unemployment compensation benefits, is amended by adding a new Code section to read as  
12 follows:

13 "34-8-200.

14 (a) The Commissioner shall institute the Employment Readiness Program for claimants  
15 receiving extended unemployment compensation benefits pursuant to this article. The  
16 program shall require participation in the Georgia Work Ready initiative established in  
17 Chapter 14 of this title. Such program shall be developed and implemented in cooperation  
18 with the Governor's Office of Workforce Development and the Georgia Workforce  
19 Investment Board. The program shall be administered by the department provided funding  
20 is made available for such purposes.

21 (b) The Employment Readiness Program for Georgia's unemployed shall be funded by  
22 federal funds received by this state for implementation of the Georgia Work Ready  
23 initiative and such other funding sources, including grants, donations, and appropriations,  
24 that may become available to the department.

25 (c) The Employment Readiness Program shall have such requirements for implementation  
26 and administration as the Commissioner deems appropriate; provided, however, the  
27 program shall include the following:

28 (1) As provided in this Code section, participation in the Employment Readiness  
29 Program shall be a condition of a claimant's weekly reporting requirements;

30 (2) Participation in the Employment Readiness Program shall only be a condition of a  
31 claimant's weekly reporting requirements when adequate opportunities for participation  
32 in the program are reasonably available to a claimant;

33 (3) Following the date for receipt of extended benefits, as indicated by the department  
34 through sufficient notice to the claimant, a claimant shall have, as a condition of the  
35 claimant's weekly reporting requirements, two weeks to enroll in the Georgia Work  
36 Ready initiative;

37 (4) A claimant for unemployment compensation benefits shall not be required to  
38 participate in the Georgia Work Ready initiative until he or she receives such benefits for  
39 an extended period of time. The extended benefit period shall be designated by the  
40 Commissioner in accordance with federal rules, regulations, and law;

41 (5) The program shall require participation in the initial assessment and such evaluation  
42 shall be completed within a reasonable time as established by the Commissioner;

43 (6) Following completion of the initial assessment, continuous participation in the  
44 Georgia Work Ready initiative, including attendance in educational courses, shall be  
45 required as a condition of a claimant's weekly reporting requirements. Continuous  
46 participation shall be required until a claimant obtains a Work Ready Certificate  
47 indicating that he or she has successfully completed the Georgia Work Ready program.  
48 The department shall designate the acceptable educational courses, which may be made  
49 available electronically, and shall also prescribe a reasonable time, place, and manner for  
50 participation by claimants;

51 (7) The Commissioner shall provide for emergency exceptions to the attendance,  
52 participation, and completion requirements of this Code section for good cause  
53 demonstrated by the claimant, including, but not limited to, illness, disability,  
54 hospitalization, and death of an immediate family member; and

55 (8) The program and courses required by this Code section shall be offered to claimants  
56 free of charge.

57 (d) The department shall be authorized to employ and contract with other individuals and  
58 organizations as needed to assist in executing the department's responsibilities, provided  
59 that funds are available for such expenditures and such expenditures are allowable under  
60 federal law.

61 (e) All state departments, institutions, agencies, commissions, councils, authorities, boards,  
62 bureaus, or other entities of the state and subdivisions of the state shall provide all  
63 information and support as required by the department to perform its duties under this Code  
64 section.

65 (f) The Commissioner shall promulgate rules and regulations for purposes of  
66 implementing the requirements of this Code section."

67 **SECTION 2.**

68 This Act shall become effective on July 1, 2011, and shall only apply to claimants filing for  
69 unemployment compensation benefits on or after such date.

70 **SECTION 3.**

71 All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are repealed.