

Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 1616

By Senators Masterson and Wilborn

5-26

1 A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION urging the Governor of the State of
2 Kansas to end Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation to
3 ensure that businesses do not have to compete with the federal
4 government in attempts to fill thousands of open positions.
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6 WHEREAS, Kansas continues to operate three federal pandemic-related
7 unemployment programs, including weekly Federal Pandemic
8 Unemployment Compensation, in addition to benefits provided by the
9 state's traditional unemployment insurance program, with the original
10 justification for these expansions being that individuals needed
11 additional benefits because of the COVID-19 pandemic, and those
12 individuals could not work; and

13 WHEREAS, The economy of the State of Kansas has now dramatically
14 recovered from the COVID-19 pandemic as evidenced by the 3.5 %
15 unemployment rate, which is lower than the state's average
16 unemployment rate from 2016 to 2019, according to the U.S. Bureau
17 of Labor Statistics, and at least 73,000 open jobs are currently
18 available in the state; and

19 WHEREAS, Employers are struggling to find workers to fill these jobs as
20 a result of the disincentive created by government benefits that,
21 including unemployment benefits, currently total \$44,756 on an
22 annualized basis, while the median wage in Kansas is \$38,667; and

23 WHEREAS, In 2019, the maximum allowed duration of unemployment
24 benefits was 16 weeks, while the Kansas Department of Labor reports
25 that individuals can now receive unemployment benefits for up to 79
26 weeks; and

27 WHEREAS, Governor Kelly's administration has instructed Kansas
28 unemployment recipients to answer "yes" when asked if they looked
29 for work, even if they have not looked for work, discouraging
30 employment while promoting deceptive conduct; and

31 WHEREAS, Fraud is now pervasive in the unemployment compensation
32 program as a result of program expansions, with one in four claims
33 being identified or reported as fraudulent in 2020 according to the
34 Kansas Legislative Division of Post Audit, resulting in Kansas paying
35 out more than \$600 million in fraudulent claims this past year; and

36 WHEREAS, It is well within this state's prerogative to end its

1 participation in federal pandemic-related unemployment programs,
2 with appropriate notice to the U.S. Department of Labor, as 23 other
3 states have done as of May 26, 2021: Now, therefore,

4 Be it resolved by the Senate of the State of Kansas, the House of
5 Representatives concurring therein: That the State of Kansas urges the
6 Governor of the State of Kansas to help Kansas businesses attract and
7 retain the employees they desperately need, spur further economic
8 recovery and growth in Kansas and immediately give formal notice to
9 the U.S. Department of Labor that Kansas will be withdrawing from
10 participation in all federal pandemic-related unemployment benefits
11 programs; and

12 *Be it further resolved:* That the Secretary of State shall send an enrolled
13 copy of this resolution to the chairperson of the Legislative
14 Coordinating Council.
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