A BILL

To temporarily change eligibility and work search requirements under the Unemployment Compensation Law and to declare an emergency.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF OHIO:

Section 1. (A) As used in this section:

(1) "Average weekly wage," "base period," "benefit year," "benefits," "claim for benefits," "employment," "qualifying week," "remuneration," and "unemployed" have the same meanings as in section 4141.01 of the Revised Code.

(2) "Special needs child" means a child who is less than eighteen years of age and either has one or more chronic health conditions or does not meet age appropriate expectations in one or more areas of development, including social, emotional, cognitive, communicative, perceptual, motor, physical, and behavioral development and that may require on a regular basis services, adaptations, modifications, or adjustments needed to assist in the child's function or development.
(B)(1) Notwithstanding the requirements to establish a valid application for a determination of benefit rights specified in division (R) of section 4141.01 of the Revised Code, for a benefit year that begins during the period of the emergency declared by Executive Order 2020-03D, issued on March 16, 2020, any application for determination of benefit rights made in accordance with section 4141.28 of the Revised Code is valid if all of the following apply:

(a) The individual filing the application is unemployed;

(b) The individual has been employed by an employer or employers subject to Chapter 4141. of the Revised Code in at least twenty qualifying weeks within the individual's base period;

(c) The individual has earned or been paid remuneration at an average weekly wage of not less than seventeen and one-half per cent of the statewide average weekly wage for such weeks;

(d) Except as provided in division (C)(2) of this section, the individual is not disqualified as described in division (R)(2) of section 4141.01 of the Revised Code.

(2) An application shall not, however, be considered valid unless the individual has had employment in six weeks that is subject to Chapter 4141. of the Revised Code or the unemployment compensation act of another state, or the United States, and has, since the beginning of the individual's previous benefit year, in the employment earned three times the average weekly wage determined for the previous benefit year. For purposes of determining whether an individual has had sufficient employment since the beginning of the individual's previous benefit year to file a valid application, "employment" means the performance of
services for which remuneration is payable.

(C) During the period of the emergency declared by Executive Order 2020-03D, issued on March 16, 2020, both of the following apply:

(1) The Director of Job and Family Services shall waive both of the following:

(a) For a benefit year that begins during that period of emergency, the requirement that an individual serve a waiting period under division (B) of section 4141.29 of the Revised Code before receiving benefits;

(b) The requirement that an individual be actively seeking suitable work under division (A)(4)(a) of section 4141.29 of the Revised Code for any claim for benefits filed on or after the effective date of this section.

(2) Notwithstanding division (D)(2)(c) of section 4141.29 of the Revised Code, an individual shall not be disqualified from being paid benefits if the individual is unemployed or is unable to return to work because of a family care responsibility, including the need to care for a special needs child or a child who is thirteen years old or younger whose school, daycare, or other care provider has been closed, arising from an order or declaration issued by any of the following:

(a) The governor;

(b) The board of health of a city health district pursuant to section 3709.20 of the Revised Code;

(c) The board of health of a general health district pursuant to section 3709.21 of the Revised Code;

(d) A health commissioner pursuant to section 3707.34 of
the Revised Code;

(e) The department of health pursuant to section 3701.13 of the Revised Code.

Section 2. This act is hereby declared to be an emergency measure necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, and safety. The reason for such necessity is to minimize the impact to Ohio citizens from the COVID-19 outbreak and help protect further spread of the disease. Therefore, this act shall go into immediate effect.