

Senate Insurance Committee

Opponent Testimony SB228

Theresa Ann Hunter

12/15/2021

Chair Hackett, Vice Chair Romanchuk, Ranking Member Craig and members of the Senate Insurance Committee.

My name is Theresa Ann Hunter, and I am a legal recruiter from Mansfield, Ohio. I am testifying as an opponent of SB228 because I am grateful Governor DeWine acted swiftly in ensuring PUA for Ohioans.

I have spent 11 years working as a self-employed Legal Recruiter. My business was successful, and I enjoyed the opportunity to purchase a house and take care of my financial responsibilities. I was self-reliant and took care of my tax obligations as per my tax person.

When the virus hit and we were told it was for only 2 weeks to flatten the curve, I was concerned but not overly so. Then 2 weeks went into 3 and then 4 now I was panicking as law firms were scrambling to get their Attorneys into a remote situation and they were not hiring AT ALL. My business went from successful to nothing almost overnight. I had never been in this situation before and was not sure what to do. When the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance was made available to me, I was ecstatic as I was not eligible for regular unemployment.

Pandemic Unemployment Assistance was a lifesaver as I was able to continue to make my mortgage, as well as purchase groceries and take care of my pets. I was able to make my obligations and to keep my community functioning by helping to keep my neighbors who were in essential roles employed. I cannot tell you how grateful I am for this program as it has kept me out of bankruptcy and my credit intact. I had never received benefits before and was thankful that they were there.

I of course am not receiving any more benefits as the program was completed on September 4th, 2021. I have applied to other jobs even those that are below my qualification level and so far, all those companies turned me down. I have some physical issues that complicate some job positions. I am the sole income earner and have some serious financial obligations that also limit me in regard to some positions.

I would like to say in closing again how grateful I am that Governor DeWine moved quickly to take care of Ohioans who did not fit the traditional role of the unemployed for if that decision had been left to the legislature who knows what would have happened to my life. Thank you for allowing me to share my experience with the PUA and to testify in opposition to SB228.