



## **Senate Bill 282 – Unemployment Compensation Employer Portal**

### **Ohio Senate Insurance & Financial Institutions Committee**

#### **Proponent Testimony**

**September 1, 2020**

Chairman Hackett, Vice-Chair Hottinger, Ranking-Member Craig, and members of the Ohio Senate Insurance and Financial Institutions Committee, my name is Chris Ferruso and I serve as Legislative Director for the Ohio NFIB. I am here before you on behalf of our over 21,000 members to offer support for Senate Bill 282. This legislation will create an ongoing, conspicuous process for employers to file eligibility concerns about unemployment compensation applicants and/or recipients.

By way of background, NFIB members come from all industry sectors and all 88 counties in Ohio. Our typical member employs 20 or fewer and has under \$2 million in gross receipts. Our membership looks like the business communities in each of your legislative districts.

Unemployment compensation benefits are provided to claimants to provide financial assistance when an unexpected separation from employment occurs through no fault of the employee. These benefits serve as a bridge to either return to a previous employer or find new work. To maintain eligibility, a separated employee must meet certain obligations under Ohio Revised Code 4141.29 including but not limited to actively seeking suitable work.

Senate Bill 282 would allow employers to report an applicant or recipient of benefits is failing to meet the requirements in 4141.29 through a conspicuous link on the Ohio Department of Job & Family Services (JFS). While a similar procedure does currently exist, Senate Bill 282 will ensure a conspicuous link and an easier reporting process remains in perpetuity. We respectfully suggest employers should be sent the link when a claim has been filed. We are optimistic that should Senate Bill 282 become law, JFS would incur little to no cost to add such a link to their existing website.

The solvency issues with Ohio's Unemployment Compensation Trust Fund are well known to this committee. We have been before the General Assembly on numerous occasions over the last decade stressing the need to pass meaningful reforms to our unemployment compensation system. We do not want to revisit the last recession where Ohio borrowed over \$3 billion to pay claims. Given the instability of our trust fund, it is paramount to protect the integrity of the system ensuring legitimate

claimants receive their benefits while disallowing individuals not fulfilling their obligations to take funds. Please note, nothing in this bill changes the existing appeal process. In the event of denial of eligibility or ongoing eligibility, claimants can appeal that decision.

Senate Bill 282 makes certain employers will have an easily accessible link in which to report individuals seeking or receiving unemployment who are not meeting eligibility requirements. This bill aims to protect the integrity of the system, ensures the reporting process is simple for employers and continues such a process in perpetuity. NFIB supports Senate Bill 282.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, thank you for your time. I am happy to try and address any questions.