

May 24, 2021

To the Honorable Members of the Pennsylvania General Assembly:

On behalf of our chambers of commerce, representing thousands of Pennsylvania employers, we write regarding Pennsylvania's workforce challenges and to express support for House Bill 406 and Senate Bill 689 to reinstate work search requirements for unemployment compensation (UC) recipients.

Act 6 of 2011, passed unanimously by the House and Senate, including a requirement that UC recipients actively search for work and register on CareerLink, Pennsylvania's public job postings website. Support for this legislation demonstrated the broad recognition that state policy should encourage unemployed Pennsylvanians back into employment and provide them resources to connect with hiring employers.

This requirement was appropriately waived as the pandemic and shutdown orders forced many Pennsylvanians out of work and left businesses unable to open or operating at reduced capacity. While full economic recovery will certainly take time, the situation has thankfully improved as businesses reopen, the economy improves and vaccines are generally available to the public.

Employers from a range of industries now report significant hiring challenges. Businesses that barely survived the pandemic are ready to reopen, rehire and begin contributing to their communities, yet are unable to find the workforce to operate and participate in the economic recovery. To be sure, workforce struggles existed prior to the pandemic and no single policy will solve this complicated challenge. However, reinstating the UC work search requirement, as most states have taken action to achieve, is an important part of a broader strategy and ought to be broadly supported as it was in 2011.

We urge you to support H.B. 406 and S.B. 689. Thank you for considering our views on this important matter.

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