

HB 288 -- UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION (Fitzpatrick)

COMMITTEE OF ORIGIN: Special Committee on Employment Security

This bill changes the laws regarding unemployment compensation. Currently, the maximum total amount of benefits any insured worker may receive during any benefit year must not exceed 20 times his or her weekly benefit amount or 33 1/3% of his or her wage credits. This bill repeals that provision and, beginning January 1, 2018, limits benefits based upon a sliding scale from 13 weeks if the Missouri average unemployment rate is below 6%, to 20 weeks if the Missouri average unemployment rate is 9% or higher.

The bill specifies the meaning of "Missouri average unemployment rate" is based upon the seasonally adjusted statewide unemployment rates, and revises the definition of "wages" as it applies to employment security laws to include termination pay and severance pay. Any lump sum payment of wages from severance pay must be pro-rated for the purposes of determining unemployment benefits.

The bill specifies that for 60 days from the effective date of the bill an employer may file a timely appeal for recovery of overpayments for the last five years due to the erroneous experience rating.

The bill raises the amount required in the Unemployment Compensation Fund before an employer's contribution rate is decreased. The bill also modifies the procedures for the Board of Unemployment Fund Financing to meet and consider the issuance of credit instruments to repay federal advances to the fund, and modifies the time employers shall pay the interest assessment on credit instruments.

This bill is similar to HB 150 (2015).