

HB 769 -- EMPLOYMENT SECURITY INTEGRITY ACT

SPONSOR: Grier

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Workforce Development by a vote of 11 to 0. Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Rules- Legislative Oversight by a vote of 9 to 0.

This bill is to be known as the "Employment Security Program Integrity Act of 2021" and requires the Division of Employment Security (DES) of the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations (DOLIR) to engage with and utilize the Integrity Data Hub designed and published by the UI Integrity Center of the National Association of State Workforce Agencies to ensure the integrity of state employment security rolls.

The bill requires DES to weekly check rolls against a list provided by the Missouri Department of Corrections to verify eligibility of benefit claimants. The bill requires DES to attempt to recover all outstanding overpayments and develop policies to pursue the recovery of fraudulent and improper overpayments. DES will annually submit a written report by December 31st to the General Assembly as outlined in the bill. The bill requires that DES enter into a cooperative agreement with the office of Inspector General of the US Department of Labor to be proactive in detecting and investigating employment security fraud and to check new-hire records against the records in the National Directory of New Hires.

The bill has a delayed effective date of January 2022.

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that the bill will help to prevent unemployment fraud. Other states have been subjected to hundreds of millions in losses from such fraud. The bill has bipartisan support and is a good government regulation. The bill should help ensure that the unemployment insurance fund remains solvent.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Grier; Associated Industries of Missouri; Missouri Chamber of Commerce and Industry; Arnie Dienoff; and the Opportunity Solutions Project.

OPPONENTS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.

Written testimony has been submitted for this bill. The full written testimony can be found under Testimony on the bill page on the House website.