

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SECOND EXTRA SESSION 2003**

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HOUSE DRH90014-LR-99 (12/9)

Short Title: Improve Services to Displaced Workers. (Public)

Sponsors: Representatives Luebke and L. Johnson (Primary Sponsors).

Referred to:

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT RELATING TO IMPROVING SERVICES TO DISPLACED WORKERS.

Whereas, the North Carolina General Assembly has come into extra session to consider the issue of economic development incentives designed to counter the effects of a prolonged downturn in the State's economy; and

Whereas, over 250,000 North Carolina workers remain unemployed; and

Whereas, North Carolina has lost a net total of more than 134,000 jobs since March 2001; and

Whereas, 121,000 of the lost jobs were in the manufacturing sector; and

Whereas, 71,000 unemployed North Carolinians are expected to exhaust their unemployment insurance benefits over the next six months; and

Whereas, home mortgage foreclosures more than doubled in North Carolina during the current economic downturn; and

Whereas, Congress and the President have failed to act to extend the availability of unemployment insurance benefits to workers suffering from prolonged, involuntary unemployment, and many North Carolina families now face the prospect of a complete loss of regular income and the strong likelihood of mortgage foreclosure, eviction, and loss of health insurance; and

Whereas, there is a large and unmet need for improved temporary services to meet the immediate needs of displaced workers; and

Whereas, the State of North Carolina's response to the plight of displaced workers, their families, and their communities could be dramatically enhanced through (i) the development of improved and better coordinated services to meet needs related to foreclosure and eviction prevention and preservation of affordable health insurance coverage, (ii) effective and efficient use and oversight of federal funds for unemployed workers, and (iii) the development of a statewide, interagency plan to fully coordinate

1 workforce development efforts with economic and business development plans; Now,
2 therefore,

3 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

4 **SECTION 1.** There is established in the Office of the Governor the position
5 of Director of Emergency Economic Relief and Recovery. The Director shall be
6 appointed by, and serve at the pleasure of, the Governor. The Director shall be charged
7 with the following duties:

8 (1) To assess the immediate needs of the State's unemployed and
9 displaced workers as well as the State's current capacity to address
10 those needs.

11 (2) To oversee and coordinate all State efforts to deliver relief and
12 workforce development services to involuntarily unemployed and
13 displaced workers.

14 (3) To develop a long-term plan for improving the State's capacity to
15 respond to the needs of unemployed and displaced workers, their
16 families, and their communities during future economic downturns. In
17 developing this plan, the Director should seek input from a diverse
18 array of groups and individuals that includes State agencies, local
19 government officials, workers, employers, trainers, nonprofit leaders,
20 academics, and members of the general public.

21 **SECTION 2.** This act is effective when it becomes law.