

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

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HOUSE BILL 7

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

Sponsors: Representatives Luebke, L. Johnson, Coates, Goodwin (Primary Sponsors); Glazier, Holliman, McCombs, Ross, and Weiss.

Referred to: Rules, Calendar, and Operations of the House.

December 9, 2003

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

1 AN ACT RELATING TO IMPROVING SERVICES TO DISPLACED WORKERS.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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28 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
workforce development efforts with economic and business development plans; Now,
therefore,

1 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

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

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

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

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

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