

Employment Security Advisory Board Meeting (Special)
Connecticut Department of Labor
April 17, 2014
Minutes

Members Present: Mark Sullivan, Eric Gjede, Shawn Coyne, Henry Zaccardi, John Toomey, John Barrasso, Sue Garten, John Olsen

Agency Staff: Commissioner Sharon Palmer, Deputy Commissioner Dennis Murphy, Stephen Lattanzio, Anne Rugens, Heidi Lane, Carl Guzzardi, Bruce Berman, John Matteis, Chris Paquette, Susan DeVito.

Observer: Rich Siegel, UTMC (via conference call)

Introduction

Mark Sullivan called the meeting to order at 9:37 a.m.

The meeting focused on Carl Guzzardi's PowerPoint presentation entitled "Unemployment Insurance Financing 101." Carl noted that the last major changes to Connecticut's taxing structure was between 1993 and 1999 when, incrementally, the taxable wage base increased 50% from \$7100 to \$15,000. Carl noted that sixteen other states are also struggling to become solvent. Nineteen states have a higher wage base than Connecticut even though Connecticut ranks approximately second in the country for highest wages. Twelve states have a wage base higher than \$26,000. Twenty-three states have an indexed wage base and have borrowed much less in this recession.

Sue Garten and Shawn Coyne inquired as to the average length of time a Connecticut claimant receives unemployment benefits – either part-time or full-time – and how this compares to other states.

Commissioner Palmer referenced that interest rates continue to remain low due to continuing high unemployment.

Rich Siegel of UTMC noted that it will be necessary to sell an increase in employer's taxes to protect the trust fund and ensure that the state legislature cannot raid the trust fund once it becomes solvent.

Sue Garten asked DOL staff to prepare a list for the next meeting of what the legislature has changed regarding benefits since 1999.

Members discussed a possible overview of the integrity program in an upcoming meeting.

Henry Zaccardi commented that claimants should be counseled with respect to their job searches, career path and income relating to job searches. Henry questioned at what point does a claimant need to look for a job that offers less pay than the claimant's last employment?

Meeting Dates:

Next meeting is scheduled for May 16, 2014 with a back-up date of May 15, 2014.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:35 a.m.