

Comment Report

HSB 203

A bill for an act relating to unemployment insurance and including applicability provisions.(See HF 754.)

Subcommittee Members: Deyoe-CH, Running-Marquardt, Worthan

Date: 02/17/2021

Time: 02:00 PM

Location: RM 103, Sup. Ct. Chamber

Name: Patrick Wells

Comment: I am Patrick Wells, President of the Iowa State Conference of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers. I represent over 10,000 electrical workers in Iowa. Our organization is in opposition to HSB 203. It is not unusual for our membership to experience periods of unemployment throughout their career. This period of unemployment is not by choice. Our members have no desire to remain unemployed for extended periods. What is the benefit to them to struggle on an unemployment check while at the same time losing their normal income, retirement and health care contributions or possibly, even worse, their healthcare coverage? This period of unemployment often comes without warning or time to prepare if you are living paycheck to paycheck. They need that first week and they need it quickly. They should not be subject to a one week waiting period to receive unemployment benefits. Why are we punishing hard working Iowans for something they have no control over? As far as removing the language providing additional relief for Iowans when their employer closes its doors. All that does is hurt people as well. I have had the unfortunate experience of having a bargaining unit lose employment for this very reason. A business with nearly 30 hardworking Iowans right here in Des Moines in fact. Through no fault of their own. They became unemployed when their employer closed up shop permanently. There are often difficulties finding similar employment opportunities for folks in situations like this and they rely on those extended benefits to get them through a tough situation as they acquire additional training or seek other employment opportunities. This language would have been devastating for these hard working Iowans. Again, why are we punishing people for something they have no control over? IBEW is in opposition to HSB 203