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Youth And Government

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FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Committee Assignment: Senate 1

Bill #: S-03

1 **Sponsors:** Zarib Alam and Gabe Hoglund

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3 **An Act To:** An act to amend Labor Law §591 to require a quota of 10 community
4 maintenance hours per week unemployed for claimants receiving unemployment
5 benefits.

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7 *The People of the State of New York, represented in the Senate and Assembly, do enact as*
8 *follows:*

9

10 **Purpose:**

11 By creating a quota of 10 community maintenance hours, a quarter of the time
12 spent on a full-time job, for every week a claimant is unemployed, the community
13 life of a claimant is expected to greatly improve and the cost spent by the State on
14 labor for community maintenance will greatly decrease.

15 **Summary of Provisions:**

16 Section 1 - Definitions

17 1. "Claimant" shall refer to the individual making a claim for a government-
18 sponsored unemployment benefit.

19 2. A claimant's "weekly benefit" shall be one twenty-sixth of the remuneration paid
20 during the highest calendar quarter of the base period by employers. However, for
21 any claimant who has remuneration paid in all four calendar quarters during his or
22 her base period or alternate base period and whose high calendar quarter
23 remuneration during the base period is three thousand five hundred seventy-five
24 dollars or less, the benefit amount shall be one twenty-fifth.

25 3. "Remuneration" shall refer to the money paid for work or a service.

26 4. "Community maintenance" shall refer to work in maintenance, such as painting,
27 cleaning, or minor repairing, done on community property.

28 5. "Base period" shall refer to a one-year time span consisting of the last four out of
29 the most recent five calendar quarters worked by a claimant and shall be used to
30 determine a claimant's weekly benefit.

31 **Section 2**

32 Labor Law §591. Eligibility for benefits.

33 2. Availability and capability. Except as provided in section five hundred ninety-
34 one-a of this title, no benefits shall be payable to any claimant who is not capable
35 of work or who is not ready, willing and able to work in his usual employment or in
36 any other for which he is reasonably fitted by training and experience.

37 4. (a) An unemployed individual shall be eligible to receive benefits with
38 respect to any week only if such individual participates in reemployment services,
39 such as job search assistance services, available under any state or federal law, if



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40 the individual participates in ten weekly hours of community maintenance per week
41 unemployed, excluding weeks or days that commence during an established and
42 customary vacation period or holiday recess, if the individual has been determined
43 to be likely to exhaust regular benefits and needs reemployment services pursuant
44 to a profiling system established by the commissioner, unless the commissioner
45 determines that:

46 (i) the individual has completed such services; or

47 (ii) there is justifiable cause for the claimant's failure to participate in such
48 services.

49 **Justification:**

50 As the unemployment issue persists nationally and on state-wide level, with the
51 current unemployment rate in NYS being 3.9%, action must be taken to rejuvenate
52 both businesses and workers. In 2015, the State of Alabama required
53 unemployment benefits to be based on service hours in an educational institution.
54 Since then, Alabama's unemployment rate reduced considerably from 6.1% to
55 3.9%, clearly with some influence from the act passed. Additionally, community
56 maintenance has been found to improve both mental and public health. In studies
57 conducted by Florida National University, the University of Nevada, and Western
58 Connecticut State University, community service has profound benefits. Overall, the
59 studies found that service combatted depression, provided for a stronger
60 community bond, and allowed for vast networking, all of which are critical in
61 rebounding from unemployment, especially in communities experiencing a
62 recession. Those bonds formed are expected to improve community life and
63 business, therefore rejuvenating employment opportunities, all while saving the
64 state money in labor for community maintenance.

65 **Fiscal Implications:**

66 As of November 2018, approximately 95,000 claimants were receiving
67 unemployment benefits at a maximum of \$450 per week, or \$23,400 annually. New
68 York State spends approximately \$2.22 billion annually on delivering those benefits.
69 With this bill in place, the State will save a minimum of approximately \$553 million
70 in labor costs for community maintenance annually.

71 **Effective Date:**

72 This bill shall go into effect one year after passage.

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