

ASK THE CANDIDATES 2022: UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE



“Should North Carolina increase its Unemployment Insurance benefits window?”

ONCE UPON A TIME, North Carolina's Unemployment Insurance program not only provided critical assistance to laid-off workers and their families but also helped to shore up the economy when times got tough. Families' rents, mortgages, utilities, and other necessities were paid for with Unemployment Insurance benefits while they weathered the downturn.

In 2013, North Carolina lawmakers passed House Bill 4 to achieve solvency for the state's Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund, which is funded by taxes on employers and pays unemployment benefits to laid-off workers. The bill permanently cut the amount, duration, and eligibility for benefits for all unemployed workers, the most severe cuts ever enacted by any state during Unemployment Insurance's 80-year history. Now our state ranks as one of the worst in the country for unemployed workers.

- Do you think North Carolina should do more to help

FACTS YOU CAN USE:

At the end of 2021, North Carolina's average weekly Unemployment Insurance benefit amount was \$229, with a maximum benefit amount of \$350 per week.

(continued)

JOB MARKET

EMPLOYMENT

Accounting	107	Inventory
Administrative/Clerical	110	Legal Administrative
Automotive	129	Legal Employment
Banking	106	Installation/Ma
Biotech	150	Management
Business Development	111	Manufact
Business/Mktg Oppy	199	Market
Computer/IT	115	Med

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people get back on their feet after losing work through no fault of their own?

the thousands of North Carolinians who lose their jobs through no fault of their own each year?

- What do you think needs to be done to support

FACTS YOU CAN USE:

While most states provide a maximum of 26 weeks of Unemployment Insurance benefits, North Carolina has one of the shortest duration periods, currently set at 12 weeks.

Economists estimate that Unemployment Insurance benefits produce upwards of \$2 of economic stimulus for every \$1 of benefits paid. Unfortunately, too few people receive Unemployment Insurance for too short a time (maximum of 12 weeks) and with too little wage replacement. North Carolina has one of the ten highest rates of hunger in the country, with 1 in 5 children in North Carolina facing hunger regularly.

Did you get a real, meaningful answer to your question?

If not, here are some follow-up questions that might help you get a more specific answer:

- Do you support efforts to increase the state's unemployment benefits so North Carolina does not rank near the bottom of states?
- Do you support providing more than a maximum of 12 weeks of benefits while workers look for work?
- Do you support increasing the maximum weekly unemployment benefit from its current amount of \$350, an amount set in 2013?

Visit www.ncjustice.org/election2022 to share the answers you received.



P.O. Box 28068 | 224 S. Dawson Street | Raleigh, NC 27611-8068
(919)856-2570 | www.ncjustice.org