

Date of Hearing: June 28, 2023

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON INSURANCE  
Lisa Calderon, Chair  
SB 479 (Padilla) – As Introduced February 14, 2023

**SENATE VOTE:** 37-0

**SUBJECT:** Unemployment compensation benefits: eligibility

**SUMMARY:** Makes clarifying and technical changes to the Unemployment Insurance (UI) Code. Specifically, **this bill**:

- 1) Removes double negative language on documents sent to unemployed individuals.

**EXISTING LAW:**

- 1) Provides that the California Employment Development Department (EDD) is responsible for administering the State’s UI program, including the payment of unemployment compensation benefits to eligible persons. (UI Code, Section 201 et seq.)
- 2) Establishes the UI program as a joint state/federal effort to provide partial wage replacement to employees who are out of work through no fault of their own.

**FISCAL EFFECT:** None

**COMMENTS:**

*Purpose:* According to the Author,

Unemployment Insurance Code contains confusing terminology that causes unnecessary appeals, consuming the time of the EDD and CA Unemployment Insurance Appeals Board (CUIAB). Currently, Unemployment Insurance Code states that people “shall not be deemed ineligible (for unemployment benefits),” due to a variety of specified circumstances that constrained their ability work. As a result of the awkward phrasing, both the EDD and CUIAB use the double negative term “not ineligible” in the concluding paragraph of their benefit decisions. The term confuses individuals eligible for unemployment benefits, who mistakenly believe they are ineligible for benefits, during a stressful period in their lives and causes unnecessary appeals. These appeals cost time and resources, and fundamentally hinder the efficiency of the unemployment benefits process. Both the EDD and CUIAB cite Unemployment Insurance Code as the basis for continuing the use of the confusing double negative terminology. SB 479 would update the Unemployment Insurance Code to eliminate the use of double negative language in consumer documents. The change would help avoid unnecessary appeals that take up valuable time, frustrate constituents, and increase inefficiencies. The bill would also update gender terms and improve overall readability.

This measure changes the term “deemed ineligible” to “disqualified for eligibility.” The intent of this change is to reduce confusion to unemployed individuals seeking unemployment compensation benefits. Additionally, the measure updates outdated language.

**REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:**

**Support**

None on file.

**Opposition**

None on file.

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