

BILL ANALYSIS

S.B. 2099
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Business & Industry
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

One of the most frequently voiced complaints from constituents to legislative offices during the COVID-19 pandemic was the inability of Texans to reach the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) directly via phone or to leave a message requesting assistance with unemployment benefits. Given the large volume of calls the agency received, frustrated Texans reported a pattern of repeated call attempts and disconnected calls when seeking to file for benefits, to address problems with their applications, or to have questions answered about their claims. S.B. 2099 seeks to address these concerns by requiring the TWC to provide a mechanism through which claimants are able to leave contact information and receive a timely response regarding the status of their unemployment claims.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE IMPACT

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly create a criminal offense, increase the punishment for an existing criminal offense or category of offenses, or change the eligibility of a person for community supervision, parole, or mandatory supervision.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, department, agency, or institution.

ANALYSIS

S.B. 2099 amends the Labor Code to require the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) to ensure that a person who files a claim for benefits under the Texas Unemployment Compensation Act is able to check the status of the person's claim through one or more convenient telephonic or electronic methods. Each method must provide the person with an option to submit the person's contact information to the TWC and receive a return phone call or email response from the TWC within a reasonable time. The bill requires the TWC to include in a prominent location on the TWC website detailed information regarding the methods available to a claimant for checking the status of a claim.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2021.