

RESOLUTION

NO. R-21-316

CITY HALL: August 19, 2021

BY: COUNCILMEMBER BROSSETT

SECONDED BY:

WHEREAS, The federal government currently provides states with the ability to opt-in to additional unemployment payment benefits for residents unemployed due to COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) provides benefits to workers like contractors who would not otherwise qualify for regular unemployment benefits; and

WHEREAS, Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (PEUC) provides workers with additional weeks of benefits; and

WHEREAS, Louisiana is now experiencing its highest caseloads of the pandemic due to the emergence of the Delta variant; and

WHEREAS, Louisiana has the most dire hospitalization rate in the country, along with one of the lowest vaccination rates in the country; and

WHEREAS, Governor John Bel Edwards agreed to opt Louisiana out of these additional unemployment benefits as part of a compromise with state legislators who agreed to raise the state's unemployment benefits by an additional \$28 per week; and

WHEREAS, Louisiana has the second lowest employment benefit amount in the country at \$247 per week, only \$7 more than Arizona who has the lowest benefit amount; and

WHEREAS, An increase of \$28 is only a modest step towards protecting our vulnerable residents who lost employment through no fault of their own; and

WHEREAS, It is a misnomer that pandemic related increases in unemployment insurance incentivize workers to stay home and not return to work; and

WHEREAS, A study by the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco found that extra pandemic-era unemployment benefits do not keep workers from accepting new jobs; and

WHEREAS, It is the state's job to put the wellbeing of Louisiana workers' above unsubstantiated claims from some businesses, especially now as we reach a new peak of the COVID-19 pandemic; and

WHEREAS, Childcare obstacles and health concerns prevent many individuals from returning to work; and

WHEREAS, Children are going back to school, and Louisiana has the highest growth in cases among children zero to eighteen with one in four children testing positive for COVID-19, according to Ochsner Health; and

WHEREAS, Ending federal unemployment benefits for Louisiana workers means more individuals will have to rely on food pantries to feed their families and more households will face eviction or foreclosure; and

WHEREAS, Step Up Louisiana is a workers right advocacy group working on behalf of all Louisiana workers; and

WHEREAS, Step Up Louisiana recently recognized Governor Edwards strong and effective leadership during the COVID-19 pandemic and called on him to find a way to maintain both the federal unemployment support and the weekly increase in the state's unemployment benefit amount. **NOW THEREFORE**

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NEW ORLEANS, That the Council supports Step Up Louisiana's call for continuation of the federal unemployment benefit assistance while also maintaining the \$28 increase in the state's unemployment benefit amount; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Clerk of Council transmit certified copies of this resolution to the Office of the Governor of Louisiana and to Step Up Louisiana.

THE FOREGOING RESOLUTION WAS READ IN FULL, THE ROLL WAS CALLED ON THE ADOPTION THEREOF, AND RESULTED AS FOLLOWS:

YEAS:

NAYS:

ABSENT:

AND THE RESOLUTION WAS ADOPTED.