**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 Fransico 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.**