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House of Representatives
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
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MEMORANDUM

TO: All House Members
FROM: Representative Frank Farry
DATE: February 24, 2011
SUBJECT: Cosponsorship of Legislation to Allow Short-Term Training While Collecting Unemployment Compensation Benefits

In the near future, I will be reintroducing legislation from last session (House Bill 2472) to allow unemployment claimants to attend full-time schooling/training while they are collecting unemployment benefits. It is important to note that current law requires that a claimant be able and available for suitable work and be conducting job search activities as required by the Department of Labor and Industry in order to collect benefits. My proposal amends Section 401 of the Unemployment Compensation Law to permit claimants to attend a short-term, full-time training/certification program and not have to be available for suitable work or actively searching for employment. In essence, this legislation would permit a claimant to devote their full energy and time to attending and completing a short-term training/certification program.

The goal of my proposal is to provide another "tool" for claimants to find full-time, gainful employment. Claimants could identify training/certification programs offered by institutions of higher education that offer reasonable expectation of employment within six months of program enrollment (such as truck driving school) and would be permitted to apply to the Department to continue to collect unemployment benefits while enrolled in such a program. It is important to note that this legislation provides *no financial aid* for the certification/training program that a claimant participates in. The legislation requires that the Department develop an application process and guidelines for the administration of this program. It also requires that the Department consult with local Workforce Investment Boards for input on approving applications in order to ensure that there are, in fact, employment opportunities for the educational program the claimant is planning to complete.

Quite frankly, I envision this program becoming another means by which local CareerLinks, with input from local Workforce Investment Boards, could steer claimants into local short-term training/certification programs that fulfill the employment needs of local industries.

Please contact Dawn Pelletier in my office at 260-6140 or by email at dpelleti@pahousegop.com if you wish to cosponsor this legislation.