

HB 986 -- Missouri Employment Work Pass Program

Sponsor: Wallingford

This bill establishes the Missouri Employment Work Pass Program to assist unemployed persons in obtaining employment and to encourage small businesses to hire unemployed persons. A person who is eligible and approved to receive unemployment benefits will be issued a numbered work pass certificate by the Division of Unemployment Compensation within the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations. The division must establish a registry, available on an Internet web site, listing the employers participating in the program. A person participating in the program must submit a request for employment to participating employers in writing, in person, or online at the discretion of the employer.

A participating employer will receive 60% of the participating employee's weekly unemployment benefit in exchange for hiring the unemployed worker but must contribute to the employee's weekly wages an amount equal to or greater than the weekly state benefit received. The bill specifies the procedures for laying off or firing a participating employee and that in the case of a sickness or a family medical emergency or an unexcused absence, the benefit will not be paid.

Any participating employer or participating employee who intentionally fills out wrong or misleading forms or information will be guilty of a class A misdemeanor, and a participating employer or participating employee who knowingly received compensation under false pretenses will be guilty of a class D felony and may be subject to a fine of up to \$10,000.