



## LB298: Fixing Nebraska's Unemployment Gap for Work-Authorized Immigrants



HEARTLAND WORKERS CENTER

**The Problem:** In Nebraska, employers already pay unemployment insurance taxes for all of their employees, and yet not every employee has equal access to those benefits. Nebraska law excludes otherwise eligible work-authorized immigrants including DACA recipients, individuals admitted with Temporary Protected Status (TPS), and asylum-seekers with work authorization receiving these benefits.

**The Bill:** This bill closes this unemployment insurance gap by amending Nebraska's public benefits statute to clarify that all immigrant workers who are lawfully present and authorized to work will be eligible to access this earned benefit.

### FAQs

#### **Who will get these benefits?**

Only workers who can verify that they have current authorization to remain and work in the United States will be able to access these benefits under LB298. This will expand benefits to current DACA recipients, individuals with TPS status, or asylum seekers. **These workers have done everything right to work and pay taxes here and deserve the benefits they have earned!**

#### **What do other states do?**

Nebraska is the only state that does not extend unemployment benefits to all work-authorized immigrants. DACA recipients, immigrants with TPS, and others with work authorization in all of our neighboring states are able to access these benefits. **LB298 will fight brain drain by encouraging these young and talented workers to stay here in Nebraska!**

#### **How many people does this impact?**

This insurance gap impacts thousands of Nebraskan residents legally working and paying taxes here. Immigrant Legal Center estimates that this gap impacts as many as 3,400 Dreamers, 1,500 immigrants with TPS, and their families, plus many asylum seekers with work authorization. The Nebraska Department of Labor denied unemployment benefits to 316 such individuals in 2020. **LB298 will increase the financial security for these workers and their families!**

#### **What will this cost taxpayers?**

Employers are already paying unemployment insurance taxes for these work-authorized employees, and they cannot legally be exempted from that obligation. Benefits are paid out of this Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund. **LB298 will not cost Nebraska taxpayers anything because the benefits have already been paid for.**

#### **Why Now?**

This pandemic has exposed that unemployment insurance is vitally important to individuals and their families. Without unemployment insurance, these households have been found to be at substantially increased risk of housing instability and delayed healthcare, both serious public health concerns during a pandemic. **LB298 will have a positive impact on public health during this pandemic.**

## **What YOU Can Do**

- **Email or Call Your State Senator**
  - Find your Senator and their email and phone at:  
[https://www.nebraskalegislature.gov/senators/senator\\_find.php](https://www.nebraskalegislature.gov/senators/senator_find.php)
  - Tell them you live in their district.
  - Tell them you support LB298 to close the unemployment gap for work-authorized immigrants.
  - Ask them to support or co-sponsor LB298.
  - Tell them your reasons and how it would directly affect you or your community.
  
- **Email or Call Members of the Business and Labor Committee**
  - **Members:**
    - Chair, Ben Hansen ([bhansen@leg.ne.gov](mailto:bhansen@leg.ne.gov)), (402) 471-2728
    - Carol Blood ([cblood@leg.ne.gov](mailto:cblood@leg.ne.gov)), (402) 471-2627
    - Tim Gragert ([tgragert@leg.ne.gov](mailto:tgragert@leg.ne.gov)), (402) 471-(402) 471-2801
    - Steve Halloran ([shalloran@leg.ne.gov](mailto:shalloran@leg.ne.gov)), (402) 471-2712
    - Matt Hansen ([mhansen@leg.ne.gov](mailto:mhansen@leg.ne.gov)), (402) 471-2610
    - Megan Hunt ([mhunt@leg.ne.gov](mailto:mhunt@leg.ne.gov)), (402) 471-2722
    - Steve Lathrop ([slathrop@leg.ne.gov](mailto:slathrop@leg.ne.gov)), (402) 471-2623
  - **What to say:**
    - Tell them you live in their district.
    - Tell them you support LB298 to close the unemployment gap for work-authorized immigrants.
    - Ask them to vote LB298 out of committee!
    - Tell them your reasons and how it would directly affect you or your community.