

Labor and Public Employees Committee

JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No: SB-354 / [Bill Status](#) / [Public Hearing Testimony](#)

AN ACT CONCERNING STAFFING IN THE UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE
Title: DIVISION IN THE LABOR DEPARTMENT.

Vote Date: 3/19/2026

Vote Action: Joint Favorable Substitute

PH Date: 3/10/2026

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Labor & Public Employees Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

This bill seeks to address reportedly long wait times for residents going through the unemployment process by ensuring minimum staffing levels within the Department of Labor. Numerous legislators have received communication about delays within the unemployment division and believe additional staffing may mitigate this issue.

SUBSTITUTE LANGUAGE (IF APPLICABLE):

LCO 3449 requires DOL to maintain the number of employees in the UI benefits division as of September 30, 2025, and hire 25 additional employees for this division by July 1, 2027.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

None provided.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Michael Adams, Legislative Assistant, AFSCME Council 4: Submitted testimony in support stating it would require CTDOL to maintain a minimum number of employees at the Unemployment Insurance Benefits Division. They explain when staffing levels are low claims take longer to process and that affects people who are already facing financial uncertainty.

Bill Finch, Director, CTLMCC: Submitted testimony in support stating that CTLMCC is concerned about the health of the state's unemployment insurance system and their speed in paying benefits. Due to their members being electricians and other building trades workers they are relying on timely unemployment insurance to get them through the lean months. They state that the current low staffing has resulted in some families having to wait weeks to months for their payments.

Ed Hawthorne, President, Connecticut AFL-CIO: Submitted testimony in support stating that in an Appropriations Committee meeting they heard testimony from CTDOL that they lost \$9.85 million in federal funding. These reductions result in reduced staff that increases wait times.

Sara Parker McKernan, Policy Advocate, New Haven Legal Assistance: Submitted testimony in support stating there is a great need to allow for an increase to the number of DOL staff specifically for unemployment benefits claims. DOL continues to receive many claims and their clients need information on their claims in a timely manner.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

Anonymous 12,13, and 14: Submitted testimony in opposition for reasons largely unrelated to the substance of the bill or stating it would increase costs.

Reported by: Lawrence Sanchez

Date: 3/30/2026