Assembly Joint Resolution No. 46

Introduced by Assembly Member Bonta

June 23, 2016

Assembly Joint Resolution No. 46—Relative to the Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AJR 46, as introduced, Bonta. Unemployment: Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act.

This measure would request that the United States Congress include unemployment rates by race and ethnicity into the Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act scoring criteria.

Fiscal committee: no.

1   WHEREAS, The Legislature acknowledges that California's
2 economy has significantly improved since the Great Recession,
3 with unemployment rates down to 5.4 percent in March 2016,
4 according to the Employment Development Department. California
5 has added 2,134,400 jobs since the recovery began in February
6 2010; and
7   WHEREAS, The Legislative Analyst's Office notes that while
8 unemployment rates are improving, California still has the second
9 highest unemployment rate in the United States, an indicator of
10 the depth of job loss experienced during the great recession and
11 the size of California's economy; and
12   WHEREAS, The United States Department of Labor, in
13 coordination with the United States Department of Education and
14 Department of Health and Human Services, is working diligently

1 to ensure that states, local areas, other grantees, and stakeholders
2 are prepared for the implementation of the Workforce Innovation
3 and Opportunities Act (WIOA), signed by President Obama on
4 July 22, 2014; and
5   WHEREAS, The Public Policy Institute of California also found
6 that while jobs have been growing for five continuous years, 45
7 percent of Californians believed economic bad times were likely
8 in 2015, while only 44 percent predicted good times; and
9   WHEREAS, Pew Charitable Trusts found that California ranked
10 among the bottom 10 states in bringing people 25 through 54 years
11 of age back to employment. In 2014, 73.6 percent of California's
12 prime working population had jobs compared with 77.9 percent
13 in 2007; and
14   WHEREAS, California's economy generates jobs at a rate
15 similar to the national rate, but it is not enough to keep up with
16 the state's fast-growing population; and
17   WHEREAS, California has also had an uneven economic
18 recovery, with the coastal regions rebounding with more economic
19 vigor relative to inland areas of the state. However, employment
20 disparities continue to persist at a city level even in counties that
21 have high rates of economic and job growth; and
22   WHEREAS, The San Francisco bay area as a region is closest
23 to closing the employment gap since 2007, while county averages
24 continue to hide persistent unemployment among certain
25 populations. In Alameda County, where unemployment dropped
26 to 4.3 percent in March 2016, African–American and Latino
27 unemployment in the City of Oakland is still high at 18 percent
28 and 16 percent, respectively; and
29   WHEREAS, The Legislature recommends that the United States
30 Congress implement a racial equity lens when structuring
31 workforce investment proposal requirements under the WIOA to
32 ensure that unemployment rates are analyzed from multiple
33 perspectives and not only average unemployment rates; and
34   WHEREAS, For every dollar of wealth a median Caucasian
35 household has, a median Asian household has about 81 cents, a
36 median Hispanic family has 7 cents, and a median
37 African–American family has 6 cents. The disparity in employment
38 exists not just by region in California, but also by race; now,
39 therefore, be it

1   *Resolved by the Assembly and the Senate of the State of*
2   *California, jointly,* That the Legislature requests that the United
3   States Congress include unemployment rates by race and ethnicity
4   into the WIOA scoring criteria; and be it further
5   *Resolved,* That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies
6   of this resolution to the President and Vice President of the United
7   States, to the Speaker of the House of Representatives, to the
8   Majority Leader of the Senate, to each Senator and Representative
9   from California in the Congress of the United States, and to the
10 author for appropriate distribution.

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