

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE TRUST FUND STUDY COMMISSION

MINUTES

EIGHTH MEETING OF COMMISSION MEMBERS

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 2021

TIME: 1 PM

MEMBERS PRESENT: Senator Pat Jehlen (Co-Chair), Representative Josh Cutler (Co-Chair), Secretary Rosalin Acosta, Director Rick Jeffers, Chris Carlozzi, Brooke Thompson, Jon Hurst, Diana Estime, Stephanie Herron Rice, John Drinkwater, Evan Horowitz, Karen Andreas, Kelsey Cintolo, Sam Gebru, Steve Clark, Hannah Tanabe, Eileen McAnneny, Rich Marlin, Carolyn Ryan, Christopher Anderson, Dan Wolf

ALSO PRESENT: Kaithlyn Connors from the Office of Administration and Finance; Matt Blackbourn of the High Tech Council; Matt Hartman of Chair Jehlen's Office; Robert Cohen, Emily Reynolds, and Lilla Adams of Chair Cutler's office.

- I. **Welcome Remarks.** Brief remarks from Representative Josh Cutler

- II. **Roll Call and Meeting Minutes.** Chair Cutler took roll. Minutes from the October 8th meeting were approved as written via a roll call vote.

- III. **Statement by Secretary Rosalin Acosta.** The Secretary noted that the trust fund has paid out over \$24 billion in benefits during the past year and a half. The state has borrowed \$2.3 billion in advances from the federal government. While a Treasury report shows that the trust fund's current balance is \$2.9 billion, Secretary Acosta says that this number is fluid and does not factor in the debts owed due to borrowing.

- IV. **Staff Presentation.** Members of the commission staff discussed their research in a number of topic areas. Staff provided a comparison of cost per employee information, data on employers with positive experience rates cross-subsidizing negative balance employers, information on Connecticut's UI reform law, and calculations around the state average weekly wage.

- V. **Commissioner Presentations.** Commission members spoke on proposals made to the commission. Eileen McAnney of the Massachusetts Taxpayers Foundation discussed a proposal made by a coalition of commission members representing employer organizations, which calls for a clear target on the size of the revenue gap the commission is trying to solve for, as well as pairing wage base changes with adjustments to UI eligibility and benefits. Hannah Tanabe and Stephanie Herron Rice spoke on a memo written by a coalition of commission members representing worker interests. Their memo recommended increasing and indexing the taxable wage base, making experience table changes corresponding with wage base increases, and limiting legislative freezes of the rate schedule. Commissioner Evan Horowitz spoke on a memo written representing his own recommendations. He recommended an increase of the taxable wage base and indexing the base to a measure of inflation.
- VI. **Future Meetings** The Commission members and chairs discussed the possibility of either adding meetings or extending the duration of the commission. No final decision was made on the matter.
- VII. **Adjournment.** Meeting adjourned at 2:57 pm.