

Senate Bill 120 was signed into law increasing the maximum weekly unemployment insurance benefit amount from \$248 to \$370. The increase is effective for new unemployment insurance benefit years that begin January 1, 2009 or later. Those with existing claims at the time will continue to receive their same weekly amount for the remainder of their benefit year or until they qualify for a new benefit year. The increase in the weekly benefit amount will affect qualified base period wages for \$26,750 or higher.

Senate Bill 120 also increases the qualifying amount for unemployment insurance benefits from \$1000 to \$2,500 and shifts a portion of the tax responsibility away from the employer to the employees.

Unemployment insurance assists workers during times of temporary unemployment and helps stabilize local economies during times of economic down turn. The increase in the unemployment insurance weekly benefit amount will further that goal.