

---

## House Bill 197

Date: February 12, 2024  
Committee: House Economic Matters Committee  
Bill Title: Unemployment Insurance - Work Search Requirement - Exemption for Federal Civilian Employees During a Federal Government Shutdown  
Re: **Letter of Support**

---

Maryland is home to a significant number of federal civilian employees. House Bill 197 (hereinafter “HB 197” or “the Bill”) would amend Title 8 of the Labor and Employment Article, Section 8-903 to expressly permit the Secretary of Labor to waive the active search for work requirement for furloughed federal civilian employees during a full or partial government shutdown due to a lapse in appropriations.

Maryland law permits the Secretary of Labor to exempt certain unemployment insurance claimants from the active search for work requirement in similar circumstances, but it does not include a provision which expressly exempts furloughed federal civilian employees from the requirement during a full or partial government shutdown, even though they are similarly situated. Furloughed workers must adhere to certain standards of ethical conduct while furloughed, which include rules regarding outside employment. For example, there are laws which prohibit certain outside activities and agency-specific rules that require approval of, and sometimes prohibit, outside employment. During a shutdown, furloughed workers may not be able to consult agency ethics officials to seek guidance on these issues.

**The Department does not anticipate any impact on expenditures or revenues as a result of the Bill and asks for a Favorable report from the Committee on HB 197.**