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By: **Delegates Rosenberg and McHale**  
Introduced and read first time: February 8, 2002  
Assigned to: Economic Matters

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A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Unemployment Insurance - Vocational and Academic Training**

3 FOR the purpose of altering the eligibility requirements for unemployment insurance  
4 benefits; altering the eligibility requirements for unemployment insurance  
5 extended benefits; and generally relating to unemployment insurance.

6 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,  
7 Article - Labor and Employment  
8 Section 8-903 and 8-1104(f)  
9 Annotated Code of Maryland  
10 (1999 Replacement Volume and 2001 Supplement)

11 Preamble

12 WHEREAS, In today's dynamic economy, most workers, especially former  
13 Family Investment Program participants, will need to regularly upgrade their job  
14 skills in order to remain viable candidates for employment throughout their working  
15 lives; and

16 WHEREAS, Current eligibility requirements for unemployment insurance  
17 may limit laid-off workers ability to collect benefits while they are in job-training  
18 programs; now, therefore,

19 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF  
20 MARYLAND, That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

21 **Article - Labor and Employment**

22 8-903.

23 (a) (1) Except as otherwise provided in this section, to be eligible for benefits  
24 an individual shall be:

25 (i) able to work;

26 (ii) available for work; and

1 (iii) actively seeking work.

2 (2) In determining whether an individual actively is seeking work, the  
3 Secretary shall consider:

4 (i) whether the individual has made an effort that is reasonable  
5 and that would be expected of an unemployed individual who honestly is looking for  
6 work; and

7 (ii) the extent of the effort in relation to the labor market conditions  
8 in the area in which the individual is seeking work.

9 (b) The Secretary may not use the disability of a qualified individual with a  
10 disability as a factor in finding that an individual is not able to work under subsection  
11 (a)(1)(i) of this section.

12 (c) (1) Notwithstanding any other provision of this section or § 8-904 or §  
13 8-907(a) or (b) of this subtitle, an individual who otherwise is eligible to receive  
14 benefits and who is in training with the approval of the Secretary may not be denied  
15 benefits:

16 [(1)] (I) for failure to meet the requirements of subsection (a)(1)(ii) and  
17 (iii) of this section to be available for work and actively seeking work; or

18 [(2)] (II) for failure to apply for or refusal to accept suitable work under §  
19 8-1005 of this title.

20 (2) TRAINING DESCRIBED IN PARAGRAPH (1) OF THIS SUBSECTION  
21 SHALL INCLUDE AN ACCREDITED EDUCATIONAL OR TRAINING PROGRAM,  
22 INCLUDING ONE THAT LEADS TO A COLLEGE DEGREE, UNLESS THE SECRETARY  
23 DETERMINES THAT THE ACCREDITED EDUCATIONAL OR TRAINING PROGRAM WILL  
24 NOT PREPARE THE CLAIMANT FOR EMPLOYMENT IN A CAREER IN WHICH THERE ARE  
25 JOB OPPORTUNITIES.

26 8-1104.

27 (f) (1) An individual shall:

28 (i) make a sustained and systematic effort throughout the week to  
29 find work; and

30 (ii) submit tangible evidence of the effort to the Secretary.

31 (2) Except as provided in paragraph (3) of this subsection, an individual  
32 is disqualified for extended benefits for any week of unemployment during the  
33 individual's eligibility period during which the individual fails to accept an offer of  
34 suitable work or apply for suitable work referred by the Secretary.

35 (3) If an individual provides evidence that satisfies the Secretary that  
36 the individual has good prospects for obtaining work in the individual's usual

1 occupation within a reasonably short period, suitability of the work shall be  
2 determined in accordance with § 8-1005 rather than paragraph (1) of this subsection.

3           (4)       AN INDIVIDUAL IS NOT DISQUALIFIED UNDER THIS SUBSECTION IF  
4 THE INDIVIDUAL DEMONSTRATES THAT THE INDIVIDUAL IS ENROLLED IN AN  
5 ACCREDITED EDUCATIONAL OR TRAINING PROGRAM, INCLUDING ONE THAT LEADS  
6 TO A COLLEGE DEGREE, UNLESS THE SECRETARY DETERMINES THAT THE  
7 ACCREDITED EDUCATIONAL OR TRAINING PROGRAM WILL NOT PREPARE THE  
8 CLAIMANT FOR EMPLOYMENT IN A CAREER IN WHICH THERE ARE JOB  
9 OPPORTUNITIES.

10       SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take  
11 effect October 1, 2002.