

Public Law 104-251  
104th Congress  
An Act

To amend the Railroad Unemployment Insurance Act to reduce the waiting period for benefits payable under that Act, and for other purposes.

Oct. 9, 1996  
[H.R. 2594]

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

**SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

This Act may be cited as the “Railroad Unemployment Insurance Amendments Act of 1996”.

**SEC. 2. WAITING PERIOD FOR UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS.**

Subparagraph (A) of section 2(a)(1) of the Railroad Unemployment Insurance Act (45 U.S.C. 352(a)(1)(A)) is amended to read as follows:

“(A) PAYMENT OF UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS.—

“(i) GENERALLY.—Except as otherwise provided in this subparagraph, benefits shall be payable to any qualified employee for each day of unemployment in excess of 4 during any registration period within a period of continuing unemployment.

“(ii) WAITING PERIOD FOR FIRST REGISTRATION PERIOD.— Benefits shall be payable to any qualified employee for each day of unemployment in excess of 7 during that employee’s first registration period in a period of continuing unemployment if such period of continuing unemployment is the employee’s initial period of continuing unemployment commencing in the benefit year.

“(iii) STRIKES.—

“(I) INITIAL 14-DAY WAITING PERIOD.—If the Board finds that a qualified employee has a period of continuing unemployment that includes days of unemployment due to a stoppage of work because of a strike in the establishment, premises, or enterprise at which such employee was last employed, no benefits shall be payable for such employee’s first 14 days of unemployment due to such stoppage of work.

“(II) SUBSEQUENT DAYS OF UNEMPLOYMENT.—For subsequent days of unemployment due to the same stoppage of work, benefits shall be payable as provided in clause (i) of this subparagraph.

“(III) SUBSEQUENT PERIODS OF CONTINUING UNEMPLOYMENT.—If such period of continuing unemployment ends by reason of clause (v) but the stoppage of work continues, the waiting period established in clause (ii) shall apply to the employee’s first registration period in a new period

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45 USC 367 note.

of continuing unemployment based upon the same stoppage of work.

“(iv) DEFINITION OF PERIOD OF CONTINUING UNEMPLOYMENT.—Except as limited by clause (v), for the purposes of this subparagraph, the term ‘period of continuing unemployment’ means—

“(I) a single registration period that includes more than 4 days of unemployment;

“(II) a series of consecutive registration periods, each of which includes more than 4 days of unemployment; or

“(III) a series of successive registration periods, each of which includes more than 4 days of unemployment, if each succeeding registration period begins within 15 days after the last day of the immediately preceding registration period.

“(v) SPECIAL RULE REGARDING END OF PERIOD.—For purposes of applying clause (ii), a period of continuing unemployment ends when an employee exhausts rights to unemployment benefits under subsection (c) of this section.

“(vi) LIMIT ON AMOUNT OF BENEFITS.—No benefits shall be payable to an otherwise eligible employee for any day of unemployment in a registration period where the total amount of the remuneration (as defined in section 1(j)) payable or accruing to him for days within such registration period exceeds the amount of the base year monthly compensation base. For purposes of the preceding sentence, an employee’s remuneration shall be deemed to include the gross amount of any remuneration that would have become payable to that employee but did not become payable because that employee was not ready or willing to perform suitable work available to that employee on any day within such registration period.”.

### SEC. 3. WAITING PERIOD FOR SICKNESS BENEFITS.

Subparagraph (B) of section 2(a)(1) of the Railroad Unemployment Insurance Act (45 U.S.C. 352(a)(1)(B)) is amended to read as follows:

“(B) PAYMENT OF SICKNESS BENEFITS.—

“(i) GENERALLY.—Except as otherwise provided in this subparagraph, benefits shall be payable to any qualified employee for each day of sickness after the 4th consecutive day of sickness in a period of continuing sickness but excluding 4 days of sickness in any registration period in such period of continuing sickness.

“(ii) WAITING PERIOD FOR FIRST REGISTRATION PERIOD.—Benefits shall be payable to any qualified employee for each day of sickness in excess of 7 during that employee’s first registration period in a period of continuing sickness if such period of continuing sickness is the employee’s initial period of continuing sickness commencing in the benefit year. For the purposes of this clause, the first registration period in a period of continuing sickness is that registration period that first begins with 4 consecutive days of sickness and includes more than 4 days of sickness.

“(iii) DEFINITION OF PERIOD OF CONTINUING SICKNESS.—For the purposes of this subparagraph, a period of continuing sickness means—

“(I) a period of consecutive days of sickness, whether from 1 or more causes; or

“(II) a period of successive days of sickness due to a single cause without interruption of more than 90 consecutive days which are not days of sickness.

“(iv) SPECIAL RULE REGARDING END OF PERIOD.—For purposes of applying clause (ii), a period of continuing sickness ends when an employee exhausts rights to sickness benefits under subsection (c) of this section.”.

#### SEC. 4. MAXIMUM DAILY BENEFIT RATE.

Paragraph (3) of section 2(a) of the Railroad Unemployment Insurance Act (45 U.S.C. 352(a)(3)) is amended to read as follows:

“(3) The maximum daily benefit rate computed by the Board under section 12(r)(2) shall be the product of the monthly compensation base, as computed under section 1(i)(2) for the base year immediately preceding the beginning of the benefit year, multiplied by 5 percent. If the maximum daily benefit rate so computed is not a multiple of \$1, it shall be rounded down to the nearest multiple of \$1.”.

#### SEC. 5. MAXIMUM NUMBER OF DAYS FOR BENEFITS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subsection (c) of section 2 of the Railroad Unemployment Insurance Act (45 U.S.C. 352(c)) is amended to read as follows:

“(c) MAXIMUM NUMBER OF DAYS FOR BENEFITS.—

“(1) NORMAL BENEFITS.—

“(A) GENERALLY.—The maximum number of days of unemployment within a benefit year for which benefits may be paid to an employee shall be 130, and the maximum number of days of sickness within a benefit year for which benefits may be paid to an employee shall be 130.

“(B) LIMITATION.—The total amount of benefits that may be paid to an employee for days of unemployment within a benefit year shall in no case exceed the employee's compensation in the base year; and the total amount of benefits that may be paid to an employee for days of sickness within a benefit year shall in no case exceed the employee's compensation in the base year, except that notwithstanding section 1(i), in determining the employee's compensation in the base year for the purpose of this sentence, any money remuneration paid to the employee for services rendered as an employee shall be taken into account that is not in excess of an amount that bears the same ratio to \$775 as the monthly compensation base for that year as computed under section 1(i) bears to \$600.

“(2) EXTENDED BENEFITS.—

“(A) GENERALLY.—With respect to an employee who has 10 or more years of service as defined in section 1(f) of the Railroad Retirement Act of 1974, who did not voluntarily retire and (in a case involving exhaustion of rights to normal benefits for days of unemployment) did not voluntarily leave work without good cause, and who had current rights to normal benefits for days of unemployment or days of sickness in a benefit year but has exhausted such rights, the benefit year in which such rights are exhausted shall be deemed not to be ended until the last day of the extended benefit period determined under this

paragraph, and extended unemployment benefits or extended sickness benefits (depending on the type of normal benefit rights exhausted) may be paid for not more than 65 days of unemployment or 65 days of sickness within such extended benefit period.

“(B) BEGINNING DATE.—An employee’s extended benefit period shall begin on the employee’s first day of unemployment or first day of sickness, as the case may be, following the day on which the employee exhausts the employee’s then current rights to normal benefits for days of unemployment or days of sickness and shall continue for 7 consecutive 14-day periods, each of which shall constitute a registration period, but no such extended benefit period shall extend beyond the beginning of the first registration period in a benefit year in which the employee is again qualified for benefits in accordance with section 3 on the basis of compensation earned after the first of such consecutive 14-day periods has begun.

“(C) TERMINATION WHEN EMPLOYEE REACHES AGE OF 65.—Notwithstanding any other provision of this paragraph, an extended benefit period for sickness benefits shall terminate on the day next preceding the date on which the employee attains age 65, except that it may continue for the purpose of paying benefits for days of unemployment.

“(3) ACCELERATED BENEFITS.—

“(A) GENERAL RULE.—With respect to an employee who has 10 or more years of service as defined in section 1(f) of the Railroad Retirement Act of 1974, who did not voluntarily retire, and (in a case involving unemployment benefits) did not voluntarily leave work without good cause, who has 14 or more consecutive days of unemployment, or 14 or more consecutive days of sickness, and who is not a qualified employee with respect to the general benefit year current when such unemployment or sickness commences but is or becomes a qualified employee for the next succeeding general benefit year, such succeeding general benefit year shall, in that employee’s case, begin on the first day of the month in which such unemployment or sickness commences.

“(B) EXCEPTION.—In the case of a succeeding benefit year beginning in accordance with subparagraph (A) by reason of sickness, such sentence shall not operate to permit the payment of benefits in the period provided for in such sentence for any day of sickness beginning with the date on which the employee attains age 65, and continuing through the day preceding the first day of the next succeeding general benefit year.

“(C) DETERMINATION OF AGE.—For the purposes of this subsection, the Board may rely on evidence of age available in its records and files at the time determinations of age are made.”.

(b) REPEAL OF DEADWOOD PROVISION.—Section 2(h) of the Railroad Unemployment Insurance Act (45 U.S.C. 352(h)) is repealed.

(c) REPEAL OF EXPIRED PROVISION.—Section 17 of the Railroad Unemployment Insurance Act (45 U.S.C. 368), relating to payment of supplemental unemployment benefits, is repealed.

**SEC. 6. EFFECTIVE DATE.**

45 USC 352 note.

The amendments made by this Act shall take effect on the date of the enactment of this Act.

Approved October 9, 1996.

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LEGISLATIVE HISTORY—H.R. 2594:

HOUSE REPORTS: No. 104-525 (Comm. on Transportation and Infrastructure).  
CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, Vol. 142 (1996):

Sept. 18, considered and passed House.

Sept. 25, considered and passed Senate.

WEEKLY COMPILATION OF PRESIDENTIAL DOCUMENTS, Vol. 32 (1996):  
Oct. 9, Presidential statement.

