

## **BILL ANALYSIS**

Senate Research Center  
76R776 JMM-D

S.B. 499  
By: Shapleigh  
Human Services  
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As Filed

### **DIGEST**

Currently, Texas unemployment law does not specifically make victims of family violence eligible for unemployment compensation benefits. Texas is one of 31 states that do not allow individuals who leave their jobs for safety reasons, such as a stalking ex-spouse or boyfriend, to qualify for unemployment benefits. A survey conducted by Victims Services in New York City indicated that 74 percent of abused women are harassed at work by their abusers and that one in four battered women had lost their job due to the effects of domestic violence. S.B. 499 will provide an individual who leaves his or her workplace upon the advice of a law enforcement officer, a licensed family practitioner, or a licensed counselor due to a threat of family violence to be eligible to receive unemployment benefits.

### **PURPOSE**

As proposed, S.B. 499 adds the eligibility of certain victims of family violence for unemployment compensation.

### **RULEMAKING AUTHORITY**

This bill does not grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, institution, or agency.

### **SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS**

SECTION 1. Amends Section 204.022, Labor Code, by amending Subsection (a) and adding Subsection (c), to prohibit benefits computed on an employee's or former employee's benefit wage credits from being charged to an employer's account if the employee's last separation from the employer's employment before the employee's benefit year resulted from the employee having been advised by a law enforcement officer, a licensed medical practitioner, or a licensed counselor to leave the employee's workplace to protect the employee from family violence or stalking. Defines "family violence."

SECTION 2. Amends Section 207.045, Labor Code, by amending Subsection (d), to prohibit a person who is available to work from being disqualified for benefits because the individual left work because of an involuntary separation as described by Section 207.046. Makes a conforming change.

SECTION 3. Amends Section 207.046, Labor Code, to provide that an individual is not disqualified for benefits under this subchapter if the individual leaves the workplace because the individual has been advised by a law enforcement officer, a licensed medical practitioner, or a licensed counselor to leave the workplace to protect the individual from family violence or stalking. Defines "family violence." Makes conforming changes.

SECTION 4. Makes application of this Act prospective.

SECTION 5. Emergency clause.  
Effective date: upon passage.