

MEMORANDUM

Agenda Item No. 11(A)(26)

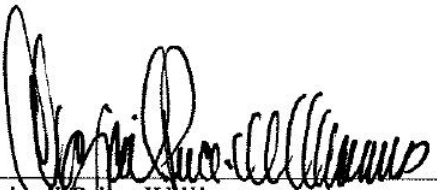
TO: Honorable Chairwoman Audrey M. Edmonson
and Members, Board of County Commissioners

DATE: May 5, 2020

FROM: Abigail Price-Williams
County Attorney

SUBJECT: Resolution urging
Governor Ron DeSantis
and the Florida Department
of Economic Opportunity to
resolve issues with Florida's
unemployment system and
expand eligibility for and
amount of unemployment
assistance in the wake of
coronavirus disease 2019
(COVID-19)

The accompanying resolution was prepared and placed on the agenda at the request of Prime Sponsor Commissioner Daniella Levine Cava.



Abigail Price-Williams
County Attorney

APW/smm



MEMORANDUM
(Revised)

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and Members, Board of County Commissioners

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Please note any items checked.

- "3-Day Rule" for committees applicable if raised
- 6 weeks required between first reading and public hearing
- 4 weeks notification to municipal officials required prior to public hearing
- Decreases revenues or increases expenditures without balancing budget
- Budget required
- Statement of fiscal impact required
- Statement of social equity required
- Ordinance creating a new board requires detailed County Mayor's report for public hearing
- No committee review
- Applicable legislation requires more than a majority vote (i.e., 2/3's present ____, 2/3 membership ____, 3/5's ____, unanimous ____, CDMP 7 vote requirement per 2-116.1(3)(h) or (4)(c) ____, CDMP 2/3 vote requirement per 2-116.1(3)(h) or (4)(c) ____, or CDMP 9 vote requirement per 2-116.1(4)(c)(2) ____) to approve
- Current information regarding funding source, index code and available balance, and available capacity (if debt is contemplated) required

Approved _____ Mayor
Veto _____
Override _____

Agenda Item No. 11(A)(26)

5-5-20

RESOLUTION NO. _____

RESOLUTION URGING GOVERNOR RON DESANTIS AND THE FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY TO RESOLVE ISSUES WITH FLORIDA'S UNEMPLOYMENT SYSTEM AND EXPAND ELIGIBILITY FOR AND AMOUNT OF UNEMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE IN THE WAKE OF CORONAVIRUS DISEASE 2019 (COVID-19)

WHEREAS, a new coronavirus, known as SARS-CoV-2, causes an infectious disease named coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) that has spread rapidly since its initial identification in Wuhan, Hubei province, China; and

WHEREAS, on January 30, 2020, the International Health Regulations Emergency Committee of the World Health Organization (“WHO”) declared the outbreak a “public health emergency of international concern”; and

WHEREAS, businesses and government offices are continuing to announce new closures daily to ensure the protection of the public health, safety, and welfare as a result of COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, the effects of this public health emergency, including business closures, have resulted in a massive and rapid increase in the number of individuals who are seeking unemployment assistance; and

WHEREAS, the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity is responsible for administering Florida’s unemployment assistance program; and

WHEREAS, multiple sources now report that the website for applications for unemployment assistance has been plagued by issues which are preventing individuals from applying for unemployment benefits; and

WHEREAS, Florida Department of Economic Opportunity Executive Director Ken Lawson recently apologized for the problems that applicants were encountering on the website; and

WHEREAS, Florida’s unemployment benefits are among the lowest in the nation, paying a maximum of \$275 a week; and

WHEREAS, Florida currently offers unemployment benefits for a maximum of 12 weeks, while many other states offer unemployment benefits for up to 26 weeks; and

WHEREAS, the Families First Coronavirus Response Act has been passed by Congress and signed into law; and

WHEREAS, the Families First Coronavirus Response Act provides for emergency administration grants to states as part of the “Emergency Unemployment Insurance Stabilization and Access Act of 2020”; and

WHEREAS, the Families First Coronavirus Response Act conditions half of this funding upon a state demonstrating “steps it has taken or will take to ease eligibility requirements and access to unemployment compensation for claimants, including waiving work search requirements and the waiting week”; and

WHEREAS, the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity has announced that, at the direction of Governor Ron DeSantis, it has waived the waiting week requirement through May 8, 2020; and

WHEREAS, the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (“CARES ACT”) has been passed by Congress and signed into law; and

WHEREAS, the CARES Act provides for federal unemployment benefits in addition to those provided by state law; and

WHEREAS, the CARES Act provides for unemployment assistance for a duration of up to 39 weeks; and

WHEREAS, the CARES Act further provides for an additional \$600 per week as “Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation”; and

WHEREAS, this Board is concerned about the impact the COVID-19 emergency has had and is continuing to have on unemployment in Miami-Dade County; and

WHEREAS, this Board wishes to ensure that all who need access to Florida’s unemployment benefits are able to apply for and access those benefits; and

WHEREAS, this Board wishes to ensure that applicants for Florida’s unemployment benefits are able to receive the benefits for which they qualify not from the date that their application is complete, but from the date of loss of employment; and

WHEREAS, this Board further wishes to ensure that Floridians are given unemployment benefits that are comparable to those offered by other states,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA, that this Board:

Section 1. Urges Governor Ron DeSantis and the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity to resolve all ongoing issues with Florida’s unemployment assistance program, including, but not limited to, fixing issues with the website, hiring additional staff to handle higher call volume, and allowing for applicants to be remotely assisted by qualified nonprofit organizations, so that individuals are able to apply for and access unemployment benefits.

Section 2. Urges Governor DeSantis to expand unemployment benefits in Florida by:

- waiving the one-week waiting period beyond May 8, 2020;
- increasing the number of weeks that applicants are eligible for assistance from 12 weeks to 39 weeks;

- increasing the maximum weekly benefit to \$600 per week, to match the Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation provided for in the CARES Act; and
- allowing applicants to self-report the date they initiated (or attempted to initiate) their application and use that date for the purposes of paying benefits.

Section 3. Directs the Clerk of the Board to transmit a certified copy of this resolution to the Governor, Florida Department of Economic Opportunity Executive Director Ken Lawson, and the Chair and Members of the Miami-Dade State Legislative Delegation.

Section 4. Directs the County’s state lobbyists to advocate for the actions set forth in sections 1 and 2 above, and authorizes and directs the Office of Intergovernmental Affairs to amend the 2020 State Legislative Package to include this item.

The Prime Sponsor of the foregoing resolution is Commissioner Daniella Levine Cava. It was offered by Commissioner _____, who moved its adoption. The motion was seconded by Commissioner _____ and upon being put to a vote, the vote was as follows:

Audrey M. Edmonson, Chairwoman	
Rebeca Sosa, Vice Chairwoman	
Esteban L. Bovo, Jr.	Daniella Levine Cava
Jose “Pepe” Diaz	Sally A. Heyman
Eileen Higgins	Barbara J. Jordan
Joe A. Martinez	Jean Monestime
Dennis C. Moss	Sen. Javier D. Souto
Xavier L. Suarez	

The Chairperson thereupon declared this resolution duly passed and adopted this 5th day of May, 2020. This resolution shall become effective upon the earlier of (1) 10 days after the date of its adoption unless vetoed by the County Mayor, and if vetoed, shall become effective only upon an override by this Board, or (2) approval by the County Mayor of this resolution and the filing of this approval with the Clerk of the Board.

MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA
BY ITS BOARD OF
COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

HARVEY RUVIN, CLERK

By: _____
Deputy Clerk

Approved by County Attorney as
to form and legal sufficiency.



Anita Viciano Zapata