

MLIVE: Michigan Democrats will introduce bill to restore 26 weeks of jobless ben

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By Jackie Headapohl

Michigan State Representative Jim Ananich (D - Flint) and State Senate Democratic Floor Leader Tupac A. Hunter (D - Detroit) announced today that they are working on legislation that would restore the six weeks of state-paid unemployment insurance cut by the bill Governor Rick Snyder signed on Monday.

The new law pushed through by Republican-controlled majorities in the House and Senate would make Michigan, which has been hardest hit by joblessness in the past decade, the only state in the country to reduce state-paid unemployment benefits to 20 weeks.

"Getting people back to work right away must be our top priority," said Ananich. "But while they are trying to find a job or being trained for new positions, we have to make sure they can still put food on their table. Restoring these resources will help families stay in Michigan and help our local businesses that depend on people to buy their goods and services."

The governor indicated in several interviews that he was forced to cut the benefits because Republicans in the Legislature added that piece to a bill needed to secure immediate help for those out of work now. In another report, he was quoted as saying he may revisit the cut to 20 weeks "later in the year."

"This is not the time to cut unemployment benefits for workers who lose their jobs due to circumstances beyond their control," said Hunter. "Restoring these six weeks of benefits will ensure that workers have all the assistance they need while they are searching for employment."