

EMPLOYERS RECEIVING BILLS FROM UNEMPLOYMENT AGENCY



A large number of non-profit organized and employers will soon receive bills from the South Carolina unemployment agency, as the agency accidentally undercharged around 400 of these employers for the past three quarters. The employers being undercharged was due to a glitch in the computer system, resulting in at least \$8.6 million being paid in benefits to unemployed individuals, without actually being recorded in the correct manner, according to the Associated Press. While the total is at \$8.6 million, the businesses will not have to worry about being charged for that complete total. Instead, the bills will be sent over to employers that can be reimbursed, which includes school districts and local governments. These types of employers have the option of receiving such bills after they perform layoffs. According to the South Carolina unemployment agency, the computer error began back in 2008, which is when the computer program started to allow unemployed individuals to apply for unemployment benefits during the weekend, which is something that was not possible before. While this change occurred, the software program only operated during business days, which means that filings that took place on the weekend were missing. It happened several times, once in December, a separate time in March, and then a last time in June, which is when the audit finally noticed that the mistake was, in fact, taking place. The Director of the unemployment agency, Abraham Turner, has said, "We certainly apologize for this error." Turner also said, "We have since increased both the scope and depth of our audit processes, and have corrected the computer software programming error. ... We strive each day to make DEW a more business-friendly agency." The Senator of the state, Kevin Bryant, has always criticized the agency, and believes that the agency has several issues that are causing a burden on businesses in the area. Bryant has said, "Employers are the ones having to pay for it." He also said, "Our employers are trying their best to expand or just stay alive. Now they're hit with this early Christmas present. There's no legislation I can pass to fix incompetency." While Bryant is critical of the agency, the leader for the Manufacturers' Alliance, CEO Lewis Gossett, believes that the agency should receive credit because they did end up catching on to the glitch. Gossett said, "This was a time bomb, their auditing practices caught a problem they inherited. This is exactly what reform was supposed to accomplish." Gossett believes that the agency still has room for improvement, but he also feels that they are doing a lot better than they once were before.