

**EXECUTIVE ORDER TO PROTECT TAXPAYERS AND REDUCE WASTE IN THE
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE DIVISION OF WORKFORCE SERVICES
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE PROGRAM**

WHEREAS: State government must protect hardworking taxpayers and tackle waste, fraud, and abuse at every level of government;

WHEREAS: According to the United States Department of Labor, the State of Arkansas spent more than \$53 million on improper unemployment benefits to ineligible applicants over the course of three years;

WHEREAS: The State of Arkansas disbursed a combined \$3.4 billion in unemployment benefits in 2020 and 2021 through its Unemployment Insurance Program, which is administered by the Department of Commerce, Division of Workforce Services; and

WHEREAS: It is the position of this administration that Arkansans deserve honesty, transparency, and accountability when it comes to state government spending, including in the Unemployment Insurance Program.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, SARAH HUCKABEE SANDERS, acting under the authority vested in me as the Governor of the State of Arkansas, do hereby order the following:

1. That the Secretary of the Department of Commerce shall review and implement measures to enhance the integrity of the Unemployment Insurance Program, reduce the rate of inappropriate payments to ineligible applicants, and reduce fraud, including:
 - a. Verifying applicant eligibility through the use of state and federal new hire directories;
 - a. Cross-checking applicant eligibility through state and federal incarceration records, state death records, and the multi-state Integrity Data Hub;
 - a. Conducting additional review and investigation of claims filed from a single internet protocol address using a similar mailing address or bank account;
 - a. Ensuring that claims made from out-of-state applicants are strictly verified prior to approval and payment;

- a. Any other measures or methods that the Secretary deems effective and efficient in carrying out this directive.

- 1. At the time of the effective date of this Order, the Secretary of the Department of Commerce shall begin implementing measures to complete these directives herein.

- 1. The Secretary of the Department of Commerce shall provide quarterly progress reports to the Governor until the directives herein have been fully implemented.

This Executive Order shall become effective upon its signing and shall remain in full force and effect until amended or rescinded by further executive orders.

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and cause the Great Seal of the State of Arkansas to be affixed this 10th day of January, in the year of our Lord 2023.