

Happy 2010! I hope everyone had a wonderful and safe holiday season and that your 2010 is off to a great start! We have truly appreciated the opportunity to work with you and hope to work with you again across 2010. Just recently, State Senator Jim Wilson recently filed legislation to authorize the Oklahoma Employment Security Commission to create a voluntary Shared Work Unemployment Compensation Program. Senate Bill 1385 would allow part time employees to receive unemployment insurance payments. He stated recently, "In this tough economy, businesses are being forced to make hard decisions. My bill would allow employers to cut back hours without laying people off and those whose hours have been reduced can supplement their income with unemployment payments," said Wilson, D-Tahlequah. "The idea is that fewer people lose their jobs while keeping wages up at a level higher than a part time salary." Part-Time Pros would love your thoughts on this. On one hand I see the benefit for employees to receive adequate wages if hours are cut. However, for employers, reducing hours is oftentimes because they are trying to reduce expense. This bill, I am assuming, would mean that employers will have to pay more to cover the cost of unemployment compensation, which will add more challenges to businesses struggling to recover from this economic downturn. I am by no means an expert of legislative issues, so if you have some thoughts and wish to share them with me directly I would welcome them. You can contact me directly at carey@parttimepros.net.

Employers wanting to participate in the program would have to submit written shared work plans to the Commission for approval. Before approval, employers would have to agree to furnish the Commission with reports relating to the operation of the shared work plan.