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CONTACT

Beth Lerner
Office of Representative Christine Hunschofsky
Beth.Lerner@myfloridahouse.gov
(850) 717-5096

John Learn
Office of Senator Janet Cruz
Learn.John@flsenate.gov
813-467-6830

Senator Janet Cruz and Representative Christine Hunschofsky File Legislation to Modernize Florida's Connect System

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. — Representative Christine Hunschofsky (D-Parkland) and Senator Janet Cruz (D-Tampa) filed [House Bill 1291](#) and [Senate Bill 1640](#), which would require the Department of Economic Opportunity to design a mobile-optimized site for Floridians to file and access the Connect unemployment benefits system.

The current system, designed in 2013 at a cost of \$77.9 million, was built to allow users access only through a computer. Floridians needing to file a new claim for benefits, update their address, change their payment method, or file their required job search details each week must do so at a computer, which requires access to a computer and internet. In 2020, at the height of our unemployment crisis due to the global pandemic, Florida saw the failures of an overwhelmed system that lacked the capacity to handle the number of claims being filed and processed on a weekly basis as well the capability to provide access to our residents without home internet and/or personal computers.

“Florida’s Connect system failed Floridians. We have a responsibility to modernize this system and allow greater access for our residents. When everyone was quarantining, our libraries and other facilities that offer free internet closed and Floridians without home computers had no access to the system to file a claim,” stated **Representative Hunschofsky**. “A modern, mobile-optimized system will allow a person with a smartphone or tablet to complete the requirements and review status updates from the State of Florida so that there is never an access issue again.”

Senator Janet Cruz stated, “We saw the myriad of issues this summer with the Connect system. These unemployment benefits are owed to Floridians because they have rightfully earned them—it is up to us to ensure they get them, and that is the exactly what this bill will help do.”

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