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**(S.D.) - SD officials seek penalty for unemployment fraud**

By: John Thayer Posted at: 05/01/2012 06:45 AM

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) - The South Dakota Labor Department has proposed changing state law to impose an additional financial penalty on people who file fraudulent claims for unemployment benefits.

State Labor Secretary Pam Roberts says people are already required to repay any benefits they receive as the result of fraud. The department is proposing to add an additional penalty equal to 50 percent of the benefits they got as the result of that fraud.

Roberts presented the plan Monday to the Unemployment Insurance Advisory Council, which will vote on the proposal at its next meeting in a few months. The council's recommendations will be presented to the 2012 session of the South Dakota Legislature.

The proposal is designed to comply with some federal requirements aimed at combating fraud in the unemployment insurance system.

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