

A Better Together Wisconsin: Wisconsin Republicans oppose extension of extra federal help for workers

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MADISON, Wis. — The fumbled response to the COVID-19 global health pandemic from Donald Trump and his administration plunged the nation into an economic crisis, leaving many Wisconsinites to deal with layoffs and job losses. Now the state Republican Congressional delegation, led by U.S. Senator Ron Johnson, is opposing an extension of enhanced unemployment benefits, even as the Trump-triggered recession drags on and unemployment rates remain at historically high levels.

“Wisconsin workers who’ve been laid off or lost their jobs shouldn’t have to pay for the Trump administration’s failure,” said A Better Wisconsin Together Executive Director Nicole Safar. “That’s exactly what Senator Johnson and the rest of the Wisconsin Republicans in Congress would do by refusing to extend extra federal help for unemployed workers during a recession.”

As part of federal COVID-related “Paycheck Protection Program” relief legislation adopted in March, unemployed workers have been eligible for an additional \$600 per month in federally funded unemployment insurance benefits. The authorization for the enhanced benefits expires in July. With unemployment remaining in double digits, an extension through the end of the year has been proposed by Democrats.

Safar noted that the crisis is even worse in communities of color, who’ve been disproportionately impacted by the COVID pandemic. Black unemployment and unemployment in other communities of color is significantly higher than the national and state average.

[In an opinion piece authored by Senator Johnson](#), he claimed the additional benefits being provided to workers were “a glaring example” of the need to “reform” the program to prevent undeserving entities from receiving help. He went on to disparage Wisconsin workers, suggesting they are choosing to “stay unemployed” because of the temporary extra help they are eligible for.

Republican U.S. House Representatives from Wisconsin are following Johnson’s lead. [In a recent news report](#), they all indicated they were opposed to extending enhanced federal unemployment benefits beyond July.

Safar concluded, “It didn’t have to be this way. Donald Trump dismissed the threat of COVID and delayed responding to the global health pandemic, triggering a recession that’s left millions of workers unemployed or laid off. Wisconsin Republicans would make a bad situation even worse by taking help away from these same workers and their families.”