

Legislative Dems: Introduce bills to remove barriers to unemployment insurance

Posted on Thursday, Jul 16, 2020

>> WisPolitics is now on the State Affairs network. Get custom keyword notifications, bill tracking and all WisPolitics content. [Get the app or access via desktop.](#)

MADISON – Today, Legislative Democrats introduced a package of bills aimed at removing hurdles and expediting the Unemployment Insurance process for Wisconsinites. Since March, the Department of Workforce Development (DWD) has witnessed an unprecedented number of unemployment claims due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The legislation introduced today would eliminate hurdles people are facing in receiving their UI benefits, many of which were added in recent years by Republican majorities. Rep. Greta Neubauer (D-Racine) released the following statement:

“The legislative package introduced today is designed to remove eligibility restrictions, make it easier to apply, and remove barriers to allow the Department of Workforce Development to process claims faster. The goal is simple: we need to remove the unnecessary hurdles and tripwires in our unemployment system, so Wisconsin workers can access these critically important resources as quickly as possible. By getting unemployment insurance to workers more efficiently, we can help alleviate the pressure and backlog created by the COVID-19 crisis.

“Time is critically important, as it can mean the difference between a family being evicted or staying in their home. In recent months, I’ve received hundreds of calls from constituents about many of these issues, and I’m glad we are able to bring these bills forward to help fix this system.

“Wisconsin families are struggling to make ends meet through no fault of their own. While 2019 Act 185 provided some help back in April, we have much work left to do to improve access to unemployment benefits for Wisconsin workers. With these

bills, the Legislature can act and help the situation — we need to convene immediately to provide further relief and support for Wisconsinites,” Neubauer concluded.

Legislation being proposed by Democrats today includes:

- LRB 6244: Allowing social security disability (SSDI) recipients to receive concurrent unemployment insurance benefits;
- LRB 6246: Reinstating the ability of those participating in extended occupational training to receive extended UI benefits;
- LRB 6249: Suspending the \$500 wage threshold for recipients of unemployment insurance benefits temporarily;
- LRB 6254: Providing DWD the authority to determine by administrative rule what constitutes suitable work a claimant must accept if offered, and what labor market conditions to review based on the number of weeks that the claimant has received benefits;
- LRB 6256: Expanding DWD authority to promulgate rules that provider waivers for certain requirements;
- LRB 6257: Eliminating the requirement that claimants wait one week before receiving benefits;
- LRB 6265: Reduces administrative requirements; and
- LRB 6362: Eliminating the concept of substantial fault from being a disqualifying factor.