

Rep. Krug: Statement on filing for unemployment

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FILING FOR UNEMPLOYMENT

Wisconsin is home to the most hardworking people in the country. We take pride in our work and our work ethic, and I know it has been a difficult time for many of our families and friends. Wisconsin's unemployment rate sky-rocketed from 3.1% in March to 14.1%, which is even higher than what the Badger State experienced during the Great Depression.

The 72nd Assembly District has not been immune to this downturn as we face COVID-19, but my office is here to help. Please see below for county-by-county total unemployment claim numbers from the last 20 weeks:

Adams County: 5,844

Portage County: 30,716

Waushara County: 10,232

Wood County: 27,454

I hear from so many of you every day about the unacceptable delays and troubles you face when trying to get the help you deserve. As a legislator in 2014, I can

remember when my colleagues and I became aware of citizens' difficulty in processing unemployment requests. We took action. We completed an audit of the entire UI program and made improvements to it, improving the lives of many people. It is beyond time for more improvements.

Of course, it was impossible to see a catastrophe like this coming, but we can do better than we are currently. For weeks on end we have asked Governor Evers and the Department of Workforce Development to expand their work hours and add staff. We passed legislation allowing for federal money to come into Wisconsin to help. These dollars are all at Governor Evers' discretion to spend as he sees fit. It would be wise to do the following:

- UI call centers should have two shifts each day (16 hours per day)
- Staff hires to cover the volume to process the claims pending. Currently 1/3rd of all claims remain. That is (675,000 individuals waiting for service, some close to 9 weeks now)
- Revamping the current system to make much needed upgrades for easier processing, states with older systems have experienced processing issues across the country.

We have done a good job in flattening the curve allowing our medical systems to remain prepared and even improve their preparedness in the event of outbreaks. Now it is time we flatten the curve on unemployment claims. We can't turn a blind eye to the hardships imposed on families who are still going without any income during the pandemic. If you are experiencing issues with filing for or receiving unemployment please contact my office (contact information below) and we will work with you to get it squared away as soon as possible.

For help with Wisconsin Unemployment Insurance please contact my office at rep.krug@legis.wisconsin.gov or 608-266-0215. Please be ready to provide the

following information:

1. Full name of claimant (Last name, First Name, Middle Initial*):
2. Phone number:
3. Date of UI Application:
4. Date of Birth/Last Four of SS#*
5. Status of application (trying to file initial claim, in appeal, etc.):
6. Reason for inquiry (can't get through by phone, unanswered questions, etc.):