

Rep. Nygren: As Gov. Evers attempts to limit businesses, he admits he has no plan for the unemployed

Posted on Wednesday, Oct 14, 2020

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Madison–State Representative John Nygren (R-Marinette) released the following statement in response to Governor Evers admitting he has no plan for the UI backlog and even claimed that the unemployment insurance backlog is in a “better place” today:

“Shockingly the governor admitted yesterday that the unemployed stuck in the unemployment backlog ‘twilight zone’ may not receive help before the end of the year, if ever,” Rep. Nygren said. “The governor has shown that he has no plan and had no plan for the spike in unemployment caused by COVID and his shutdowns. Weeks ago, he openly admitted he had no answers for the unemployed and things seem not to have changed.”

Yesterday, Gov. Evers said that the UI program will be in a “good place” by the end of the calendar year. Previously, his goal was to end the backlog by August. This did not happen. There are more than 80,000 unemployment claimants stuck in the adjudication backlog. Evers thinks the 80,000 are in a much “better place” today. Some of these claimants have been waiting since the beginning of the pandemic with no financial assistance.

State data released yesterday shows the average time from application to individuals getting a state unemployment payment has increased from 17 days in May to 25 days today, or nearly 50%. Wisconsin’s unemployment payment timeliness is one of the worst in the nation.

The governor has been on the job for nearly two years and he has not initiated the IT benefit system upgrade he blames for every problem in unemployment. His agency did not even request funds for an IT system upgrade in their agency budget request submitted just last month.

Former Secretary Frostman admitted the UI benefits IT system is not the main reason behind the backlog. He also hoped to “catch up” on the backlog by the end of the year, the same timeline Evers is now giving, showing no improvement.

The Legislature gave the governor the power to transfer employees to work on the backlog in April with no legislative oversight and Evers never used the power.

“The excuses and passing of the buck is tired and old,” Rep. Nygren said. “The unemployment backlog will be fixed with hard work, process improvement, and leadership. Unfortunately, that leadership has been lacking. Republicans have been calling for changes for months with no plan from the Governor.”