

Reps. Pocan, DeLauro: To Introduce Layoff Prevention Bills

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MADISON, WI —Today, **Congressman Mark Pocan (WI-02)** and **Congresswoman Rosa DeLauro (CT-03)** announced they will introduce two bills to prevent working people from being laid off due to the coronavirus pandemic. The *Preventing Layoffs During a Public Health Emergency Act* and the *Layoff Prevention Act* would provide federal support for states' work sharing programs, which give employers the flexibility they need to maintain their workforce and keep American workers on the job. Struggling companies will be able to reduce hours instead of their workforce—helping them save on rehiring costs—while employees will keep their jobs and receive a portion of Unemployment Insurance (UI) benefits to make up for lost wages.

DeLauro championed these provisions during the financial crisis and secured inclusion of parts of the *Layoff Prevention Act* in the *Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012*. By 2016, work sharing programs were established in 29 states, including Connecticut. However, the federal financing and grants lapsed in August 2015 despite DeLauro's [efforts](#) to extend them.

“Work sharing is one of the most impactful tools we can utilize to reduce widespread layoffs nationally during this pandemic,” **said Congressman Pocan**. “A public health emergency doesn't mean we have to leave small businesses to face this crisis alone. More than half of all states already have work sharing programs that give small businesses and their workers the flexibility to reduce employee hours while allowing workers to collect partial unemployment

insurance to compensate for lower hours. At a time when workers live in fear of losing their next paycheck, we must do everything in our power to protect their livelihoods.”

“Businesses are closing and people are losing their jobs right now because of the coronavirus pandemic,” **said Congresswoman DeLauro.** “Working people and families are facing an unprecedented threat to their economic security, and many do not know how they are going to be able to put food on the table and pay their bills. Fortunately, Congress can help make a difference in people’s lives right now. By expanding federal support for work sharing programs, workers would be able to keep their jobs and companies can avert layoffs and costly rehiring. Moreover, with fewer workers unemployed, there is less of a burden on the Unemployment Insurance benefits system—which is currently being strained in many states. Work sharing programs were a bright spot in the aftermath of the financial crisis, and we should immediately reinstate federal support for them in the next coronavirus response package.”

DeLauro serves as Chair of the Appropriations Subcommittee that funds the Department of Labor, and Pocan serves as a Member of the Subcommittee.

Senator Jack Reed (D-RI) has introduced companion legislation in the Senate.