

Sen. Hansen: Rep. Nygren and republicans are the ones responsible for unemployment chaos

Posted on Thursday, May 21, 2020

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(Madison)—State Senator Dave Hansen (D-Green Bay) called out State Representative John Nygren, Assembly Chair of the Joint Finance Committee, and his Republican colleagues for deliberately deceiving the public about the main cause of the problems people are experiencing in applying for and receiving their unemployment insurance benefits.

“After years of doing everything possible to make it more difficult, time-consuming and frustrating to apply for unemployment insurance benefits, Rep. Nygren and his fellow Republicans are exposing themselves for the hypocrites they are,” said Hansen. “If they really cared about workers, instead of trying to shift the blame for the chaos they’ve caused they would work with Governor Evers to remove the obstacles they put in place so people can get the benefits they’ve earned in a timely manner.”

During the eight years that Scott Walker was governor he, Nygren and Republicans in the legislature passed a variety of bills making changes to the state’s unemployment system that have created barriers for people to qualify for UI benefits. The result is fewer people are able to receive benefits and delays in people receiving the benefits they’ve earned. The best known of those changes delayed payments on valid UI claims for one-week before claimants can receive payment but other changes lengthened the application process itself by making more cases reviewable and by lengthening the review process.

“There is no doubt that the unprecedented increase in unemployment claims caused by the COVID-19 pandemic has exposed a system that is technologically and otherwise unable to keep up. Governor Evers, Secretary Frostman and the workers at Workforce Development are doing their best to resolve those.”

“But Republicans deliberately built in obstacles that made it more difficult for

people to qualify for unemployment benefits and to deny as many people as possible the benefits they've earned. To deny their role in the pain their changes are now causing thousands of Wisconsin workers is not only dishonest, but it is part of their willful effort to undermine Governor Evers and people's faith in their government."

Republican's delay in passing legislation to address state issues related to the pandemic resulted in the state losing out on \$25 million in federal funding.

"Considering their own incompetence cost state taxpayers \$25 million I would think Rep. Nygren and his colleagues might be a little more circumspect in their comments. Rather than continuing to attack Governor Evers and the dedicated public servants at Workforce Development they should work with the Governor to remove roadblocks that are keeping people from getting the benefits they've earned."