

Sen. Wanggaard: Unemployment audit shows shocking incompetence by Gov. Evers administration

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MADISON – A legislative audit on Monday shed some light on the complete inability of Governor Evers' administration to provide unemployment benefits to the hundreds of thousands of Wisconsin families left without work due to COVID-19 and Evers' Safer at Home Order. A lot of the delays were caused by DWD not taking action on its own to move ahead with the claim, even when they had all the information they needed, and being slow to ramp up efforts to address the backlog.

"I don't fault DWD for being caught behind the eight ball, that is to be expected," said Van Wanggaard (R-Racine).

"But the Evers' administration's failure to act, even when the ball was in their court for 2-3 months is beyond inexcusable – it's almost criminal. How many people were forced into depression, or panic, how many people suffered because of their incompetence?"

Among the audit's findings were:

- An AVERAGE wait time of 6 weeks for processing of unemployment claims entirely the fault of DWD including:
 - o 5 1/2 weeks average delay when DWD had all the information needed
 - o 6 1/2 weeks average delay prior to DWD requesting more information for claimants
 - o 2 1/2 months average delay prior to DWD requesting information from employers
- Waiting two months before adding adjudication staff despite the hundreds of thousands of claims in adjudication, and being overwhelmed on day one.
- Almost 25% of claims taking more than 5 weeks to process – some still waiting

□ Adjudicators only averaging 3.3 hours of overtime for 6 months.

“These aren’t just statistics. These are heart-wrenching stories of people victimized by the Evers’ administration’s complete inability and/or unwillingness to help our unemployed workers,” said Wanggaard. “I mean, who waits 6 weeks to put something they already have into a computer when people are suffering? And why are people only working 3 hours a week extra? Basically, it means they ate lunch at their desk and made it home for dinner. That’s it. That’s their response to an economic crisis that they helped create. It’s inexcusable.”

Wanggaard also noted that despite the fact Evers dismissed his previous DWD secretary, the Administrator of Wisconsin Unemployment Division is still working in his \$105,000 job, despite the almost 100,000 claims that remain unresolved as of October. Wanggaard has previously called for the resignation of Wisconsin’s Unemployment Administrator.