

U.S. Sen. Baldwin: Calls on state legislature to eliminate waiting period for laid-off workers needing unemployment assistance in Wisconsin

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WASHINGTON, D.C. – After Congress worked to expand unemployment insurance for laid-off American workers in response to the coronavirus pandemic, U.S. Senator Tammy Baldwin and members of the Wisconsin Congressional Delegation are calling on Wisconsin State legislative leaders to eliminate the one-week waiting period, currently required under state law for recipients of unemployment assistance, to provide much-needed financial support to Wisconsin workers as quickly as possible and allow the State of Wisconsin to receive federal aid. The letter was also signed by Wisconsin U.S. Representatives Ron Kind, Gwen Moore and Mark Pocan.

In their letter to Wisconsin State Senate Majority Leader Scott Fitzgerald and State Assembly Speaker Robin Vos, the Members urge the State Legislature to act immediately to ensure that Wisconsinites who've lost their jobs are able to receive full unemployment insurance benefits immediately.

The Members write, *“On Friday, March 27, 2020, President Trump signed sweeping coronavirus aid legislation into law, the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act. Among the law’s many provisions is a significant expansion of federal assistance for state unemployment insurance programs. Specifically, the legislation provides full federal reimbursement of workers’ first week of unemployment insurance benefits. The reimbursement is only available to*

states that do not require a waiting week. Because Wisconsin law requires claimants to wait a week before they can receive benefits, the growing number of jobless Wisconsinites are not eligible for this federal assistance.”

The Members went on to criticize the State Legislature’s plan, outlined on Wednesday, to pay beneficiaries their first week benefit retroactively. **They write,** *“The legislature’s plan to delay action on the one week waiting period and rely on retroactive pay—without any assurance from the Department of Labor that it is allowed—unnecessarily risks the financial security of hundreds of thousands of Wisconsinites suffering through this time of record-breaking unemployment.”*

They continue, *“We are in the midst of an unprecedented public health crisis. As many workplaces have been forced to close to slow the spread of coronavirus, unemployment claims have increased dramatically and are expected to continue rising in the near-term. Over 250,000 unemployment claims have been filed in recent weeks. Every day that we wait we leave money on the table for cash-strapped Wisconsinites.”*

The Members conclude, *“In closing, we urge you to act quickly to ensure that Wisconsinites who have lost their jobs are able to receive full unemployment insurance benefits immediately. Eliminating the one week waiting period will make a significant difference in the lives of Wisconsin’s workers.”*

The full letter is available [here](#).

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