

U.S. Sen. Baldwin: Supports legislation introduced to avert looming financial disaster for millions of unemployed workers

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WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Senator Tammy Baldwin (D-WI) is cosponsoring the *American Worker Holiday Relief Act*, legislation introduced to avert looming financial disaster for millions of workers who have lost their jobs through no fault of their own.

“People out of work are struggling to get by during this ongoing economic crisis. Without an extension of federal programs, millions of unemployed workers could lose their income in the coming weeks. We need to act now to extend aid programs created under the *CARES Act* and help people who are out of work through no fault of their own,” **said Senator Baldwin.**

Currently, the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) program and the Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (PEUC) program are set to expire on December 26.

The Baldwin-backed bill would retroactively extend the \$600 weekly federal boost to unemployment insurance benefits through October 2021, as well as tie the additional weeks of federal benefits and the new Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) program for gig and freelance workers to economic conditions on the ground. The additional weeks of federal benefits and the program for gig and freelance workers would not expire as long as the three-month average national

unemployment rate is above 5.5 percent, and will stay available longer in states where unemployment remains high.

The *American Worker Holiday Relief Act* would add 26 weeks of federal benefits for workers receiving traditional unemployment insurance. An additional 13 weeks of benefits would be added for each percentage point a state's unemployment rate rises above 5.5 percent, up to a maximum of 78 weeks when a state's unemployment rate is above 8.5 percent.

The bill would also strengthen the PUA program by adding 26 weeks of benefits, and clarifying that workers who need to care for children whose schools are not fully open for in-person learning, or whose employers are not following COVID-19 health and safety rules are covered by the program.

The additional weeks would harmonize benefits for workers covered by traditional unemployment insurance and the PUA program.

The legislation was introduced by Senate Finance Committee Ranking Member Ron Wyden (D-OR), Senate Democratic Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY), Senate Banking Committee Ranking Member Sherrod Brown (D-OH), Senate Finance Committee Member Michael Bennet (D-CO), and Senator Jack Reed (D-RI).

An online version of this release is available [here](#).