

Rep. Shankland: Our constituents deserve action on unemployment reform

Posted on Friday, Jan 15, 2021

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MADISON- Earlier this week, Governor Tony Evers signed an executive order calling on the Wisconsin Legislature to convene in a special session to discuss legislation to modernize our state's unemployment insurance system. Republican legislative leadership responded shortly thereafter by issuing a joint statement rejecting the call to convene.

Rep. Katrina Shankland (D-Stevens Point) issued the following statement in response:

“My Republican colleagues and I agree that it is unacceptable for folks in our state to experience such significant hurdles and delays when accessing the unemployment benefits they are eligible for. Throughout this pandemic, we've seen how delays can affect our constituents' lives, particularly those who are already struggling to make ends meet. That's why I'm baffled by my colleagues' refusal to convene to act on modernizing our state's unemployment insurance system.

“Last summer, I introduced a package of eight bills with my Democratic colleagues outlining changes that we could make immediately to remove barriers to applying for unemployment insurance, expand eligibility, and allow the Department of Workforce Development to process claims faster. That package of legislation was completely ignored by my colleagues across the aisle and was never brought up for further consideration. A few promising provisions were included in Assembly Bill 1, but this legislation's future is uncertain due to disagreement between Republican

leadership in the Senate and the Assembly. Now, Governor Evers has put forth new suggested legislation, which Republican leadership is strangely refusing to discuss. How will we fix the problem if we can't even meet to discuss it?

“We all agree that there is a problem – now let’s come together, engage in meaningful discussion and negotiation, and find a path forward. Our constituents deserve immediate action, and they’re counting on us to work together.”