

U.S. Rep. Fitzgerald: Joins delegation, calls on Evers to clarify efforts to prevent unemployment fraud in Wisconsin

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WASHINGTON, DC – Congressman Scott Fitzgerald (WI-05) joined the Wisconsin Republican delegation yesterday in calling on Governor Tony Evers to clarify his past and present efforts to prevent unemployment fraud during the pandemic. [Recent reports](#) indicate that up to \$400 billion may have been stolen by criminals and foreign adversaries, both wasting taxpayer dollars and undermining U.S. national security.

The lawmakers are calling on the Governor to publicize how many fraudulent claims were made by the state of Wisconsin, what detection services he put into place, and whether he's found that those detection services reduced fraud.

*"The windfall of expanded federal unemployment payments has exasperated labor shortages that Wisconsin businesses simply cannot afford. Not to mention, the Department of Labor and U.S. Secret Service have revealed as much as \$400 billion in fraudulent unemployment payments were made, some payments making their way into the hands of foreign criminals," **said Rep. Fitzgerald.** "Governor Evers must answer for how his past and current efforts have kept Wisconsin tax dollars secure. In the meantime, the evidence is clear, we must scale back these federal unemployment bonuses."*

*"We should all be alarmed by reports that up to \$400 billion in unemployment assistance may have been stolen over the course of the pandemic," **said Rep. Gallagher.** "Given multiple federal agencies issued warnings to states about*

ongoing efforts to steal these benefits, Governor Evers needs to immediately clarify how many payments may have been fraudulently made and what steps his administration took to ensure these dollars got into the right hands. Wisconsin taxpayers deserve full transparency on whether their hard-earned income went to criminals.”

*“We’ve now seen estimates of hundreds of billions of dollars in fraud related to federal unemployment assistance. Wisconsin taxpayers cannot be on the hook financing foreign actors’ activities at home and abroad. We urge Governor Evers to protect our national security and be vigilant in ensuring these funds are not getting into the hands of criminals,” **said Senator Johnson.***

*“People often refer to the increased Unemployment Insurance as an extra \$300, but it is \$300 per week. That’s \$1,200 per month and \$2,400 per month last year when the increase was \$600 per week—on top of regular benefits. Now we’re finding out that \$400 billion may have been stolen nationwide through state unemployment programs. Governor Evers’ failure to implement processes to verify individual claims last year was irresponsible, and we need to know if this has led to widespread fraud within the system and a massive waste of taxpayer dollars,” **said Rep. Grothman.***

*“Unemployment assistance must be a temporary solution to help workers who’ve fallen on hard times, not a source of income for criminals. I urge Governor Evers to provide transparency into cases of fraud and actions taken to protect taxpayer dollars from criminals,” **said Rep. Steil.***

*“From his job-killing lockdowns and failure to get unemployment assistance into the hands of those who needed it most last year, Governor Evers’ pandemic response has been among the worst in the entire country. In recent months, he made a bad situation worse by pushing policies that have made jobless benefits more lucrative than full-time work, hitting employers even harder. Now we’ve learned that hundreds of billions in taxpayer funds have found their way into the pockets of criminal organizations and foreign scammers. Given this record of incompetence, Wisconsin taxpayers deserve to know what safeguards – if any – were put in place by this administration to protect Wisconsin taxpayers against widespread fraud and abuse,” **said Rep. Tiffany.***

You can read the full text of the letter [here](#).