



JOEL KITCHENS

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 1ST ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

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Rep. Kitchens supports temporary unemployment relief

MADISON, Wis. – Rep. Joel Kitchens (R-Sturgeon Bay) is joining his legislative colleagues in calling on Gov. Tony Evers to use a portion of the state’s share of federal CARES Act funding to provide temporary financial relief to residents who are still waiting for their unemployment benefits from the Department of Workforce Development.

“I am proud that my office has been able to assist nearly 200 constituents who have contacted us about not receiving their unemployment payments after losing their jobs due to the COVID-19 pandemic,” Rep. Kitchens said.

“However, there are still more than 100,000 citizens across Wisconsin who applied for unemployment months ago and still haven’t gotten any answers,” Rep. Kitchens added. “I have heard many of their stories and they are absolutely heartbreaking. No one should have to wait this long, especially those who are struggling to pay their bills or put food on the table.”

Because only the executive branch has legal authority over how federal CARES Act dollars are spent, the state Legislature is formally requesting that Gov. Evers uses some of that funding to provide unemployment benefits to individuals whose claims are still in adjudication.

The payments would essentially act as zero-interest loans and the reimbursements could be utilized for other COVID-19 expenditures or be deposited into the Unemployment Trust Fund.

Legislators have also asked Gov. Evers to direct the DWD to extend the days and hours the unemployment call center is open, to pre-pay unemployment claims while a full review is conducted and to call applicants and businesses to verify applications rather than mailing verification letters.

“While these are unprecedented times, the people who have been waiting patiently for months for their unemployment benefits do not want to hear any excuses,” Rep. Kitchens said. “These residents have been laid off or furloughed through no fault of their own and it shouldn’t be taking this long to get them the payments to which they are entitled. I am hoping that Gov. Evers sees the merits of our proposal and will work with us for the betterment of our state.”

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