



For Immediate Release
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Wisconsin Democrats Announce Legislation to Remove Barriers to Unemployment Insurance

MADISON- Today, Wisconsin Democrats introduced a package of bills to remove barriers to Unemployment Insurance (UI) benefits for Wisconsinites. Since March, the Department of Workforce Development (DWD) has witnessed an unprecedented number of unemployment claims due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The legislation introduced today would eliminate hurdles people are facing in receiving their UI benefits. Over the past eight years, Republican majorities added unnecessary obstacles to the unemployment insurance process, effectively restricting access to UI benefits for folks who need them. Rep. Debra Kolste (D-44) will co-author two of the bills, and released the following statement:

“I introduced a bill to eliminate the one week waiting period eight years ago, something other states and the federal government deemed important during COVID-19. Instead of easing the process for people unemployed through no fault of their own, I witnessed my Republican colleagues pass other harmful restrictions while I sat on the Assembly Committee on Public Benefits Reform,” Rep. Kolste commented. “Creating more and more obstacles to prevent people from receiving UI benefits has come back to haunt us. Among other measures, I realize how important it is for people with disabilities to not be excluded from the benefits of working,” she added.

While some relief from these challenges was provided by the passage of 2019 Act 185, more must be done to improve access to UI benefits for Wisconsinites who are struggling to make ends meet. “People need help urgently. This employee-friendly package of bills will expand benefits to people that are more than deserving,” Rep. Kolste stated.

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