



Democratic Governor Understands It's Time to End the Unemployment Bonus *Unfortunately for Wisconsin Employers, It's the Democratic Governor of Louisiana*

[Waukesha County, Wisc....] Common Sense Wisconsin is calling on Governor Tony Evers to join his fellow Democratic Governor, Louisiana's John Bel Edwards, and end the state's enhanced unemployment bonus. Employers across Wisconsin have indicated the extra benefits have worsened the labor shortage here.

"This isn't a partisan issue, it's just common sense," said Executive Director Joe Handrick, a former administrator of Wisconsin's Unemployment Insurance program. "The quarantine emergency is over, but the \$300-a-week unemployment boost has created a new emergency. The Legislature passed a bill to end the extra \$300 weekly payment, and the Governor should sign it."

This isn't Evers' first Unemployment disaster. It has been well documented how many Wisconsinites were harmed by the inability of the Governor to pay unemployment benefits in a timely fashion in 2020. Hundreds of thousands of newly-unemployed citizens had trouble even accessing the UI system and waited months to learn if their claim was accepted. The wait times on the phone were astronomical. The Governor ultimately had to fire his Workforce Development Secretary for his inability to resolve this issue. Now, in 2021, the Governor is harming the integrity of the UI program in a different manner altogether.

"The UI weekly payment now works out to be just shy of \$35,000 per year," said Handrick. "That's just nuts...For many workers, unemployment now pays more than a job, and that's part of the reason why every city, village and town in the state is littered with help wanted signs."

Evers said he's leaning toward vetoing the bill, because he's not seen any proof that people are accepting benefits instead of joining the workforce. Handrick said he would like to show the Governor proof by inviting him to breakfast at Paul Bunyans in Handrick's home town of Minocqua, but he can't because the famous cook shanty is closed for the summer -- cannot find enough help.

"He's isolated in a bubble, or perhaps ignoring what everyone else sees," said Handrick. "Governor Evers has upset the very delicate balance between security and incentive that has made UI one of the most successful programs in the history of Wisconsin."

Until 2020, the UI payment structure always rewarded work - period. If a person lost their job and was collecting benefits, they would never be punished for earning some money while seeking permanent employment. Reductions in benefits were carefully crafted to reward the worker for working -- even if it were temporary or part-time.

"Unemployment was never meant to be a welfare program -- it was an insurance program that gave temporary assistance to those who lost their job through no fault of their own," said Handrick "The Governor apparently doesn't understand that the UI program never sought to be a permanent replacement for work."