

**To: All Representatives on the House Interim Committee on Business and Labor**

## **Testimony For the Committee regarding OED**

May 30, 2020

I just completed watching the live stream of questions presented to Director Erickson and her deputy this morning regarding the OED problems. Unfortunately I did not learn anything new and am still in the dark concerning my UI/PUA claim.

On 3/28/2020 when the CARES ACT was announced I applied for regular UI because I knew I would qualify and OED directed me to. I knew I would not qualify under the regular UI program but trusted that OED had a plan to adjust the application process to include self-employed people. I waited, received some non-valid claim letters but no real denial.

Then on 4/23/2020 I received an email invite to participate in the PUA Pilot Program. It was such a relief and I took great care in filling out the application. It was sent via an online portal on 4/24/2020. I did not receive a confirmation number so the next week I resubmitted it with my weekly certification. And waited. By mid May other small business owners like me started reporting claims being processed and paid, some in as little as two weeks. I became concerned there was a problem with my claim so for the week of 5/18-5/22/2020 I starting calling OED as well as emailing and writing letters. I also contacted my representative and senator for my district. I did, after hours of listening to busy signals and being on hold, speak to two separate people, at two different times, at OED who basically said they couldn't help me. They both said they couldn't even confirm if I had a PUA application on file.

It was said during the meeting the more complex PUA claims were taking longer to process. I guess I would have to assume mine is more complex because if it was just one or two boxes checked wrong I would hope someone would call and it would get fixed.

I'm trying to understand what makes my more complex. I am a sole proprietor of a small clothes-making business that has been a Portland Saturday Market member for 17 years. We currently have pared down staff at the PSM office that can verify this information. I have had an Oregon State business license since 2004. This is verifiable. I have a workshop and own a home in

Milwaukie, Oregon. This is verifiable. I've had a website presence, [reversibleoveralls.com](http://reversibleoveralls.com), for many years and much of my information is there. (I may not have it much longer because I can't pay to maintain it and it's too complex for me to manage. My webmaster doesn't work for free.)

Based on everything I've read in the application and gleaned from webinars and the OED CARES page my application is pretty cut and dried. And a great number of my Portland Saturday Market peers are getting their claims processed and paid, and most applied after me. I'm perplexed because this process of getting approved seems random to me. I will be filing my 10<sup>th</sup> week of unemployment tomorrow. OED is not acknowledging me on any level through this process. Today I felt like I was just hearing more empty promises. I'm tired, broke and scared.

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