

My name is Arden Goldberg, I'm a self-employed Oregonian, and a member of the Oregon 1099/Sole Proprietor Covid-19 Impact group. You're welcome to put them down as my affiliation, though I do not represent the group as a whole. I realize today's meeting is already over, but hopefully another meeting is scheduled soon.

A few hours ago, the OED made a Facebook post, and I made a somewhat impassioned comment in response. I realize now that it would make a decent testimony, so here it is.

I'm copying this to the relevant legislators as well; though I do not believe I reside in any of your districts, the issues are universal to all Oregonians currently grappling with OED's implementation of the CARES Act.

OED's post on June 1, 2020 at 2:32 PM PDT, copied exactly as written:

We receive letters about "a problem" but they don't say what it is or how to resolve the issue? Why won't they tell us what is missing?
Why are they not calling? Or sending emails, that can be responded to, Instead we get vague letters.

Our system does send vague and sometimes confusing standardized letters. It seems like it should be as easy as editing a Word document or typing in a text message to change those automated responses. Unfortunately, that's not the case in an older mainframe system. We can and do want to work on improving those messages, and continue the long-term work of modernizing our systems to provide clearer information.

Our PUA claims processing team and our more experienced regular claims takers are now making outbound calls to those with PUA and older claims that have issues to get them resolved and processed.

My comment in response:

First day with a new director and you write this addled mess? Not even checked for typos? Not a good look.

The language I'm using here is stern, but civil. It should fully comply with your comment policy. I encourage anyone who feels like responding to respond in kind.

I am a member of <https://m.facebook.com/groups/1043986252667759> and I encourage any 1099 workers and small business owners looking for information and collective support to join.

Here's my take:

Quit the excuses. Prioritize simple PUA claims. There are people losing everything. Yes, I know there are some stays on evictions, but they are unevenly enforced, and rife with loopholes and blanket exceptions. Same with the freezes on utility bills.

These claims are supposed to be self-certified and paid quickly. Audit them later.

Your employees and management are stuck on a paradigm of making every interaction with OED as obtuse, Kaskaesque, and deliberately difficult as humanly possible in order to discourage UI claims. It's a

paradigm that directly goes against everything the CARES Act and PUA program was supposed to be. Change that messed-up culture, and if people won't change, fire them.

QUIT TRYING TO CONVERT PUA CASES INTO UI CASES when the evidence for a PUA case is much stronger. OED reps are absolutely obsessed with doing this, and it's wasting a huge amount of time.

I personally know of multiple cases where the OED is badly botching dead-simple PUA claims. A few are for gig workers, where your reps have denied the claims, and are trying to make it a UI claim. This is the WRONG TIME for a classification fight. The gig workers may well be misclassified employees, but in the time you will waste futilely trying to extract UI payment from the gig companies, people and families in Oregon are suffering.

Another similar case from my partner's family member, relayed here as accurately as can recall: they quit their previous job, and were about to start a new (higher paying) job when the shutdown started. Dead simple PUA case. They have full documentation.

OED rep called them, wasted 20+ minutes explaining how it would be a normal UI claim and not a PUA claim (the OED rep was blatantly wrong here, since they QUIT their old job, and will therefore NOT be eligible for UI under your own rules). The OED rep didn't care to see any documentation, and instead insisted that an OED adjudicator will have to contact their old business. The old business is ALSO CURRENTLY CLOSED, the UI claim will obviously be denied (again, they quit their previous job), and the adjudication process will take up to ten weeks. TEN WEEKS!

This should have been a dead simple claim. Again, your reps have seemingly been ordered to attempt to turn every possible PUA claim into a UI claim, even when evidence to prove a PUA claim is easily available. Perhaps this saves the state money, but people are hurting.

Get these claims processed. People went along with the shutdown orders because they trusted the state would help keep food on their table and the rent paid when their business opportunities shut down. This is a serious betrayal of that trust.

Speaking of betrayals of trust, let your reps work from home. There are simple, off-the-shelf solutions for doing this securely.

If you have to, call in commercial contractors. A few hundred thousand PUA claims is not some magical, impossible, overwhelming thing. It's OED's own policy and procedures and inability to adapt to the duties and responsibilities of fulfilling the CARES Act that have slowed things to a crawl. Right now, we're looking very bad compared to California and Washington.

If I could tag my legislators here I would, but I'll just be emailing a copy of this post and my comment to them.

\\ There are obviously other serious things going on right now. Policing in the US needs accountability and reform. Black Americans need to be as safe interacting with law enforcement as Americans of any other background. SARS-CoV-2 needs solving. This comment is not to distract or detract from any of that; it's just a narrowly focused and impassioned response to this seemingly tone-deaf post from OED.

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Hope this helps provide perspective from a very frustrated Oregonian.

Screenshots of post and comment attached.

Thank you for reading,

Arden Goldberg

Note: Please use discretion with your personal information in written testimony (i.e., do not add personal information you do not want the public to see). All meeting materials, including your name and any personal information contained in the submitted documents, are posted to the Oregon Legislative Information System (OLIS) and are accessible to all major search engines, including Google, Bing, and Yahoo.



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We receive letters about “a problem” but th...



Oregon Employment Department

3 hrs · 🌐



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David Bergman

You had 11 years to "fix your system". Now's



Arden Goldberg

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