

This written note is intended as testimony for the legislature hearings.

I initially applied for unemployment benefits at the beginning of the pandemic. After several weeks I was denied unemployment benefits and told in a letter I may qualify for pandemic unemployment assistance and that I should apply. I do believe I qualify for these benefits and did apply for the PUA benefits in April. I got a letter towards the end of August denying the PUA benefits and explaining that they are denied because I first have to apply for the Oregon unemployment benefits, which I have already done and was previously denied in April and they should have a record of this since they are the ones that denied me. I have called well over 50 times and have never been able to get through to speak with someone. On the rare occasion I didn't immediately get a busy signal I eventually was hung up on without ever making it through to a live person. I've also written letters and have never received a response. Personally it feels like mass incompetence and a very intentional dismissal of my case just to clear the backlog and be able to check a box and be able to report to others that they are clearing the backlog instead of actually providing benefit. This is a shame for this to happen to me, but is extremely depressing knowing this is happening to thousands of Oregonians when there is already so much stress occurring in the midst of this pandemic. Needless suffering!

Jeremy Jones