

To the Senate Committee on Labor and Business:

I am contacting you to provide my input for your hearings on Unemployment and Insurance Benefits.

I specifically am struggling as my unemployment has been suspended because I worked in a school as a teacher in 2019, even though I have spent the fall of 2019 and the portion of 2020 when I was working (before being laid off) transitioning to employment outside of education/schools. According to Oregon's own rules for unemployment, I am eligible for payments, but I have no way to get help or even provide simple answers to questions that may move this process along. I am now waiting with I don't know how many thousands of others for who knows how long until my claim is examined. In the meantime, there is little work available due to this crisis, especially if one has health-related concerns. This situation leaves a lot of people, myself included, in stressful situations.

Additionally, it is not easy to access information on what the current backlog of claims is or how long it may take to process this backlog. I have heard that I may be waiting from 3-16 weeks. As I am now on my fifth week of submitted and unprocessed claims without hearing any specifics other than a out dated form letter from the Employment Department, this is more than concerning. I have also heard that there are funds available for those whose claim will be approved, but to obtain those, all I can do again is wait and see if someone contacts me.

This system is obviously over-taxed, but without communication to those in need the problem and the stresses become worse. Please help.

Rebecca Donathan