

To whom it may concern.

My name is Christina Lambert. I provided a testimony at today's hearing regarding the Unemployment Department's issues. I had so much I needed to say but with the three to five minute window I feel I failed at providing a complete understanding of the effects this has had on me and my family.

First off I want to thank everybody who has stood up for us Oregonians and gave us the opportunity to speak out. I also want to thank the public who shared their stories. I hope it moved everyone as much as it moved me, listening to these broken, devastated Oregonians. I'm in my fifth month of fighting my unemployment claim so I am numb and tired due to this tedious process. I've sent email after email retying each one individually in hopes I could be heard and my situation be understood so I can get the much-needed help I've been needing since April 25th. So by this time I'm exhausted and my ability to express everything accurately is slowly dimming the further into this battle I go.

I realized after hearing some of the emotion in people's voices today the importance it plays in providing others a genuine idea of how hurt we are and how bad we're struggling.

During my statement I briefly went over the course of the last 5 months and how unfair my claim was handled. I feel like this process has been made impossible So eventually I'll give up. Every option I exercise leads to a dead end and feels as if I'm trying to push through a brick wall just to get no help or make any progress on my claim. Even just talk to somebody who's capable of providing me with useful, accurate and helpful information that can move these issues along. I was unfairly denied as I mentioned and I have proof of a statement the department made stating that the adjudicators will contact you before making a decision and if they cannot reach you via phone then they will mail you a letter to respond within a certain time frame and my adjudicator never contacted me after all those months weeks days hours of waiting by the phone praying to hear from somebody only to be denied. When I finally heard from him he was uninterested in my situation and even less interested in reconsidering stating I had submitted an appeal anyways as if it wouldn't have a huge impact on me for him to reconsider.

I feel helpless at this point. I wasn't given the proper information or forms to submit an appeal formally. So with the best of my knowledge and the information I gathered on the internet I did what I thought was best and hand wrote an appeal for a hearing. I submitted one through email and one via mail on July 20th providing all the required information.

The hearing department has a separate number that was provided in my denial letter however that number only has a Message directing you elsewhere with the inability to gather hearing information as the letter claimed it would provide. I mentioned previously that I mistakenly transferred myself to a gentleman from a different department but he was willing to look into my case for me and stated he did not see any note that suggested I submitted an appeal. I have no way to contact anybody who can be of help to me. To this day I have not had any contact made by the department other than the weekly letters and the unbeneficial conversation I had with the adjudicator only after already being denied.

It truly is devastating and I thank goodness these unfortunate circumstances surrounding my claim happened in the time they did although in the worst time I have been able to get assistance for other resources such as rent and utility help. Had it not been for that assistance my kids and I would be on the streets at this time.

I'd like to shed some light on the situation surrounding my initial discharge from my job. It was a direct result from the severely abusive marriage I was in. My husband did everything he could to ensure he made me suffer and one of the last things he was able to take from me was my job. This job was the best thing that's happened to me throughout my entire course of being employed and it was devastating to take that loss. I had already suffered so much loss, loss that I didn't deserve such as my job that I know I did not deserve to lose I worked hard regardless of the situation I was facing at home or at work. I became a mom at 18 and three weeks after having a c-section I have not stopped working for 9 years I've worked tirelessly. I've always carried a full-time job and worked hard to provide for my kids although it's been far from easy. My life has been faced with pothole after pothole but everytime I get up fighting and pushing. I finally got myself into a position that changed mine and my children's life. Only to have it Stripped Away From Me.

I prayed over and over throughout the course of waiting for my claim to be denied or approved, in my heart knowing I didn't deserve to lose my job and keeping faith that it would work out in the end. But unfortunately it came to a abrupt end when I was unexpectedly denied without receiving any contact from the Department. I was left with this helpless feeling this feeling of unfairness. I don't think my claim was properly assessed causing all that time to be thrown away and left for the birds. With no Direction on what to do moving forward no information on whether or not I should apply for PUA and if it would affect my regular UI claim Etc. I'm supposed to direct everything to the hearing department now that my claim has been denied but I find it impossible to do so. As I mentioned I feel I was set up for failure from the beginning, that I was battling an impossible victory the way everything has panned out. At this point into the situation there's no choice but to give up it would seem. I've exercised every option I could think of and reached out to everybody I could. With no record of an appeal and all the time that has passed since I've been denied I feel there will be no justice made for me and my family. I'm the sole provider for my two young boys and with them both being an elementary school one starting kindergarten this year I don't know how I'm going to manage to find a job that allows me to be home with them to assist them with online schooling as I do not have child care due to this pandemic.

I have stretched pennies I didn't know I had to make sure my kids were fed that our electricity stayed on and they had that necessary Essentials they needed. During the time of waiting for a phone call my phone service was disconnected resulting in me having to use a Wi-Fi phone app just to keep in contact with the Department. I mentioned in my statement during the hearing the inability to provide my son just one simple birthday gift for his 9th birthday. Gratefully there's people around that love us and made sure he had a good birthday and I had food stamps to buy him whatever cake he wanted but it didn't make up for the feeling I had inside as a mom and not being able to provide your child with the birthday they deserved. I have nobody to lean on or fall back on for help my mom passed away when I was 21 so there were times I've had to make something out of nothing, make miracles happen when I ran out of options.

I live with anxiety every single day, the feeling of anxiousness and the feeling of the unknown from what tomorrow may bring. I don't know what to do moving forward and I don't know how life will play out in the foreseeable future. I find myself sitting in the beautiful home I've built for me and my children wondering how much longer we have to enjoy it before we're packing up with no where to go.

The Department's negligence, incompetence and inability to successfully process my claim in a timely manner regardless of the outcome has had a negative impact alone. I need help I need answers and I need an opportunity for a hearing.

In the news article I read regarding the purpose of this hearing is stated the director would provide answers to things such as the new federal programs it has implemented and I'm curious if he was able to provide a clear and direct response that backed up that statement. I'm also wanting to know the progress the Department's made with the appeals and how many hearings they've been able to hold compared to the Appeals for hearings that have been submitted. And why I haven't been contacted in regards to my hearing in over a month.

Thank you for your time.

Christina Lambert

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