

I am one of the thousands of people writing to you, I want to thank you for taking the time to hear/read our stories.

Prior to the Pandemic, I had made a successful career in customer service. I am 38 years old and last year was the first time I broke \$30,000.00 annual income. My 18 year old self expected to make \$30,000.00 8 or so years ago. This was even considered conservative to many of the adults around me at the time-- I was on the college tract!!

At the end of February, my partner and I began to discuss our household health and safety plan. I had already set up the house to have 6 weeks of food, he said we need 8 to ten. I made a purchase plan to get us up to that inventory level within 2 - 3 weeks.

First week of March, I went to work. My partner stayed home -- his employer was one of the first in the nation to set up remote work. I picked up the "on call equipment" so I could answer calls after hours from home. With the setup, I could do 80% - 90% of my job tasks to assist cardlock customers with resetting PINs, shutting off fuel pumps, etc. Then the first school was closed in Lake Oswego. We had decided that school closure would be one of our metrics. Mathew Jubitz, the future president/ceo of the company, went around our office, handing out bleach wipes. He was joking about having "the covid" that he had the sniffles... I got sick, I still completed the on call duties, but I didn't want to make myself sicker, or risk infecting my coworkers who were even more immunocompromised than me.

Long story short, Jubitz would not allow me to even provide my own tablet and phone to complete my duties during regular hours from home, like I would have done if we were snowed in.

I resigned on March 21. My partner looked me straight in the eye and said "Our lives are more important than a paycheck."

I filed my first claim soon after. I had been through adjudication before, I knew I would need to be adjudicated this time.

Previously in claims that required adjudication, I was contacted by the adjudicator approximately 3 weeks after my first filing. When governor Brown announced the closure, I multiplied that wait by 2. When I found out about OED not allowing staff to work remotely, I again doubled the number of weeks I expected to wait from 6 to 12.

I was a sick and tough as nails yet fragile child. I was told at an early age I would be a prime candidate for joint replacement surgeries if I were 40 as opposed to 12. I was told to expect severe hearing loss due to illness and family history by my late 30's. So I went to as many concerts as I could. When I couldn't afford the tickets, I worked for them. I joined street crews, I would call hotlines to win tickets.

I never expected I would be setting my alarm, with a list of phone numbers ready for me to cycle through until I got through for unemployment benefits. In the online support groups I joke about how I had to make over 1000 dials before I got through to be put into a que to wait for over 3 hours for a quick 10 to 15 minute conversation. I say "I never thought my years of fandom would translate into real world skills!"

When others start telling everyone to stop using the redialers, I share with them my experiences of watching technology change and switchboard operators explanations/complaints evolve from those with fast fingers on the rotaries, to the redial, to the touch tone phones pre-programmed numbers, to *66, to the current redialers. I refuse to deny/direct people from using the tools available to get their voices heard.

I started calling week 6 to confirm I was in adjudication. I finally got through week 7. Week 9, my online support group discovered our representatives were given tools to help us out, so I emailed my state reps. I was added to the spreadsheet. I received a call from an adjudicator at the end of week 11, he said he had been handed my file just 5 minutes prior.

I received my first payments week 12.

My math was correct.

Unfortunately for those who've filed after me, the exponential growth in wait times has exploded.

Had I not called and made it through in week 7, I wouldn't have known I needed to restart my claim due to the system malfunction in early April when they tried to waive the waiting week.

We need help. Please allow OED staff to remain safe, remain healthy, and work from home. Please find a way to better automate the updates on claims and appeals. I am now reading multiple stories a week from those who are appealing their decisions, only to be told there's no record of their appeal request. Please open the phone lines back up for worksource employees to receive calls. Yes, they can't do much in the system, but they are able to receive calls and assist in helping us figure out where we are in the process and what additional steps we need to make. They had been amazing with helping many of us out and having their phones redirected/not receiving calls is doing no one any favors with the new wait times.

Thank you for reading my story and my requests. In short, we want to be safe, we want to be healthy, we want to be fed, warm and housed. Without payments from our insurance policies, we are unable to see those wants as the needs they truly are.

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Multnomah County