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**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
Washington, DC 20515-3809

EDUCATION AND LABOR  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON:  
HIGHER EDUCATION &  
WORKFORCE INVESTMENT  
HEALTH, EMPLOYMENT, LABOR,  
AND PENSIONS

**BUDGET**

VETERANS' AFFAIRS  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON:  
ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY  
HEALTH

Friday, April 24, 2020

Governor Tom Wolf  
Office of the Governor  
508 Main Capitol Building  
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Dear Governor Wolf:

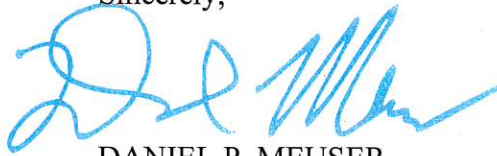
In response to the unprecedented public health and economic crises of the coronavirus, Congress passed the CARES Act. This legislation provided necessary funding to hospitals and established programs to help employees and employers through the challenges of an intentional economic slowdown. The Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) provides loans to cover 2.5X monthly payroll costs for small businesses affected by COVID-19. If the business uses the loan to maintain or re-hire its employees, the loan is fully forgivable. The intent of the PPP was to shore up small businesses most vulnerable to economic challenges and keep as many employees as possible on payroll. For workers who were laid off, the CARES Act provides an additional \$600 weekly payment from March 27, 2020 until July 31, 2020. This augmented unemployment payment was designed to support distressed individuals and families who may have been laid off from an employer that could not provide any employment at this time, even with the assistance of a PPP loan.

In order to create a disincentive for unemployment and to encourage businesses to utilize the PPP, the DOL issued regulations on the guidance on the Unemployment Insurance (UI)-related provisions that explicitly stated that the additional \$600 payment is only meant for individuals who have been laid off through no fault of their own. The guidance clarified that "quitting work without good cause to obtain UI benefits is fraud under PUA" – if an employee walks off the job or refuses an employer's offer to return to work, they are ineligible for the augmented UI. The guidance also notes that "states are expected to enforce this provision." Earlier this week, you were asked if there was any way of revoking the augmented unemployment benefits for an employee who refused to return to work. Your answer, "No," is in direct contradiction with the law established by the CARES Act. This has created confusion for business owners and I respectfully ask that you update your answer in a way that is accurately reflective of the CARES Act. The law was deliberately written to maintain the balance between providing emergency UI compensation for those who cannot work and encouraging the rehiring of those employees who can.

I also believe it is worth noting that the CARES ACT was intended to avoid any excesses for any category which would create undue economic disruptions. For example, while a laid off employee is able to access the augmented UI, many will lose their employer-sponsored health care coverage. Although COBRA plans would be available in these situations, disruption of health care coverage and other benefits will only further exacerbate the economic challenges of this pandemic.

I look forward to working together to assist in safely getting Pennsylvania back to work with safety standards uniform for all, as well as working together with the private sector on creative ideas to safely advance our economy. We can maintain high levels of protective health measures to ensure employees and customers are safe, while also beginning to open our economy again. These do not have to be exclusive strategies. For example, allowing safe-distanced outdoor seating at restaurants can put this industry on a competitive track towards recovery. Thank you for your attention to these matters. Employing an "all-of-government" approach which requires the input, expertise and innovation of the private sector will help ensure we have the best plan for Pennsylvania's economic recovery moving forward.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'D. Meuser', is positioned above the printed name.

DANIEL P. MEUSER  
Member of Congress