



Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515

Thursday, May 13, 2021

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

Dear Governor Wolf:

I am writing regarding Pennsylvania's supplemental unemployment compensation. Since the onset of the pandemic, small businesses have faced numerous challenges. These businesses now face an unnecessary worker shortage due in part to unemployment compensation payments that disincentivize work. I ask your Administration cease supplemental unemployment compensation and reinstate work search requirements that were waived last year.

The recovery now underway is very different from March 2020 when supplemental unemployment was first implemented. The U.S. Department of Labor reports 8.1 million open jobs were available in March and there are plentiful well-paying jobs in every industry offering incentives for new hires across Pennsylvania. Despite a fertile job market, the economy added only 266,000 jobs last month. Although other factors play a role, that many individuals receive unemployment checks that equal or exceed their regular pay is an obvious disincentive to seek employment.

Supplemental unemployment is a temporary program designed to provide relief during the pandemic. Similarly, the General Assembly waived work search requirements for 2020, although your Administration has continued this policy in practice through 2021. As vaccination rates increase and case counts decrease, certain emergency relief measures should be reconsidered and curtailed. Programs should be revised to target those with children home due to school closures or with certain medical conditions. Those who can work, however, should be expected to seek a job.

Restoring work search requirements and considering factors such as the claimant's vaccination status, children's mode of learning, and health conditions would ensure relief goes to those in need. It is imperative disincentives to work be eliminated for individuals who can work. By doing so, Pennsylvania will overcome this unnecessary labor shortage and accelerate our full recovery.

Thank you for your attention to this critical matter to our recovery from this pandemic.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Dan Meuser".

DAN MEUSER
Member of Congress