

House Ways & Means Committee  
May 19, 2020  
House Bill 614  
Written Testimony

Chairman Merrin, Vice Chairman LaRe, Ranking Member Roger, and members of the House Ways and Means Committee. I would like to give you my thoughts and experiences going through the Unemployment application process.

- I was surprised and disappointed to learn if a person lost their job as a result of the Covid-19 Virus they were subject to a minimum wage restriction. My unemployment claim was denied because I did not make enough money. I feel the requirement should have been dropped during these emergency times. In my case, I depend on my part time job for living expenses.
- Communication to ODJFS was impossible. Whenever I called, I was told by recording lines were busy and call back another time. The recordings did not give me an option to hold. No matter when I called no response. Also, since so many people were at home why weren't there evening hours offered (late night). That could spread the callers out instead the luck of the draw during day time hours. Once I filed on line I felt like I was in a black hole not knowing where to turn.
- Without personal assistance, specific questions could not be asked that are pertinent to our situation. If a wrong step is made it could delay payment of funds at a stressful financial time.
- The chat line feature was always busy or just available to change a password only. One size fits all doesn't apply to everyone going through the process.
- The questions and answers on line were somewhat helpful but I had questions that were not listed.
- I also feel this type of pandemic situation may not be the last. Any changes made now should be documented and ready for use in the future. This should be an operational learning experience. I know steps take time to implement but it is very stressful when an applicant is facing the unknown without support.

Thank you for reading my testimony.

James Taylor  
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