

## HB 614 Prop. Testimony

Chairman Merrin, Vice-Chairman LaRe and Ranking Member Rogers, I appreciate the opportunity to address you, and the other members of the Ways and Means Committee about House Bill 614.

On March 20, 2020 my employer asked if being furloughed was a viable option for me. We discussed it and decided that I would voluntarily furlough and file for unemployment. On March 24, 2020 I filed my unemployment claim online. The website was slow and sometimes unresponsive. I expected these issues due to the number of people applying. I was patient and was able to process my claim. I received emails stating I had correspondence from unemployment but was unable to access the correspondence. It stated that the report was not available. This happened multiple times daily and for days. On April 1, 2020 I was able to access the correspondence and my income or employment information was not available to unemployment and they required more information. I contacted my employer and they requested the information from their accountant.

On April 2, 2020 my claim was disallowed for no income. I appealed the decision, explained the delay from March 25 to April 1 was due to not being able to access the correspondence and I was waiting for information from my employer. On April 9, 2020 I received my income information from my employer and mailed the correspondence form and a copy of my W2. During this time, I waited patiently for a response knowing that the unemployment employees were undoubtedly overwhelmed. On April 25, 2020 I received an email from William Grayson, Auditor stating that my employer had been paying me under the wrong social security number. He stated the issue had been fixed there and that my claim would be processed soon. I again waited patiently for a response or payment. After discussing the issue with friends who were also furloughed and having problems collection unemployment, I received an email address that helped quicken the process for them.

On May 5<sup>th</sup>, 2020 I emailed [BAM-QA@jfs.ohio.gov](mailto:BAM-QA@jfs.ohio.gov), the email given to me from a friend. I did not get a response.

On May 10<sup>th</sup> I emailed William Grayson because he was the only contact I had from the unemployment office.

On the morning of May 11<sup>th</sup>, I emailed [OWCMS-help-desk@jfs.ohio.gov](mailto:OWCMS-help-desk@jfs.ohio.gov). This was an email address provided to me from another friend. I did not get a response. Later that day William Grayson returned my email and suggested I make a call to unemployment and that it might speed up my claim.

I set my alarm for 6:50AM on May 12<sup>th</sup> to call unemployment. At 7:00am I dialed unemployment. Someone picked up asked me if I could access the website. I answered Yes. They asked if I was calling about my pin number. I answered No. He then said he was transferring me. I waited for about 30 minutes and someone picked up. Our connection was not good and the call was cutting out. I said, "Before we go any further, our connection is not good. Will you take down my name and phone number in case we get disconnected?" She then relayed

my name and phone number. I told her my situation and started asking questions. I asked multiple questions. Is my claim being processed? Am I going to receive payment? I asked other questions that I don't remember but almost every answer was I don't know. After multiple replies of I don't know I was frustrated. I asked if she could transfer me to someone who did know the answers. I don't remember her words exactly but her tone became defiant and rude. I thanked her for her time and disconnected the call. A few hours later, I checked my claim on the unemployment website and my weekly claims had changed from disallowed to denied. I was very upset and emotional. I walked away and debated my next move. I decided to file a new claim on that same day.

The following day, May 13<sup>th</sup>, I received a claim instruction sheet and on May 14<sup>th</sup> my claim was approved and they acknowledged March 15<sup>th</sup> as my last date of employment. It clearly states I will only be paid for weeks claimed. On May 18<sup>th</sup> I received my weekly unemployment payment and the additional Federal payment. I am not working again so I will not be making any further weekly claims. I can no longer access my previous claim and have heard nothing about the weeks that were denied.

[Your experience with unemployment goes here. Most testimonies are about a page or two, but feel free to be as detailed as you like".]

Chairman Merrin, thank you for giving me time to discuss the legislation and I would be happy to answer any questions the members of the committee may have.

[When taking questions, it is customary to address the representative asking the question through the chairman. For example, if Rep. Fraizer were to ask you a question, you would respond starting with, "Through the chairman to the representative..."]