



**HOUSE OF DELEGATES
WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE**

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May 12, 2020

via email

The Honorable James C. Justice
Governor
State of West Virginia
1900 Kanawha Boulevard East
Charleston, WV 25305

Dear Governor Justice:

During this pandemic, you have continued to give assurances that claims regarding the unemployment crisis were under control. We on the ground have been hearing a different story, so last week, several members of the Democratic House Caucus reached out to their constituents through social media and asked if anyone was having trouble with their unemployment claims. The number of people who were proactively reaching out to us was already high, but when we sought out stories, the response was overwhelming.

On Friday morning, we sent a spreadsheet to General Hoyer, Commissioner Adkins, and Director Malinoski with more than 100 people who had reached out via email, text message, phone call, or direct message through Facebook in just 48 hours. Today, we have another spreadsheet with another 100+ names gathered yesterday and today. Those people are not statistics and they're not issues that need to be solved. These are West Virginians who haven't been paid in weeks and are struggling to pay the rent, keep their utilities on, and feed their families.

Your press conferences are giving people false hope by stating the claims are cleared and issues are being dealt with when some West Virginians' are still dealing with unanswered helplines and stalled processes.

We are not in any shape, form, or fashion asking WorkForce WV or the National Guard to work harder than they already are. We've been reaching out to them with individual issues since this crisis began, and our constituents appreciate when someone reaches out personally and walks them through their problems. What we are asking is for you to show empathy to our shared constituents who are having issues with their unemployment during your daily press briefings. People already have enough to worry about right now -- especially those who have not been paid --

- without being blamed for having not filled out their unemployment forms perfectly during such an uncertain time.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Delegate Mick Bates
Delegate Shawn Fluharty
Delegate Doug Skaff, Jr.
Delegate Cody Thompson
Delegate Lisa Zukoff

Delegate Sammi Brown
Delegate Sean Hornbuckle
Delegate Margaret Staggers
Delegate Danielle Walker

cc: General Hoyer, Adjutant General of West Virginia's National Guard
Secretary Bill Crouch, West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources
Commissioner Scott Adkins, WorkForce WV
Director Andy Malinoski, WV Dept. of Commerce, Office of Marketing and Communications