



# WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE

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## **Rep. Bowen and Sen. Johnson Working Hard to Ensure Wisconsinites Receive Unemployment Benefits**

*LRB 6249 Would Expand Access to Earned Benefits While Recognizing Worker Initiative*

MILWAUKEE - Upon the release of LRB 6249, a bill to temporarily lift the cap on earning wages while receiving unemployment benefits, bill authors State Rep. David Bowen (D-Milwaukee) and State Sen. LaTonya Johnson (D-Milwaukee) released the following statement:

“It’s no secret that Wisconsinites have been struggling as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and the economic crisis that has resulted, and one of the most glaring pressure points has been our unemployment insurance system. Years of convoluted rules have made it unnecessarily difficult for families to receive the benefits that they have rightfully earned, but we are committed to rectifying that issue and making sure that during this pandemic, everyone is taken care of,” said Sen. Johnson. “LRB 6249 is one reform that would not only help families get the benefits they’ve earned more quickly, but also recognize and reward their effort in exhausting every avenue possible to provide for their families. Working people should not be penalized for doing everything they can to make ends meet during a crisis, but without this bill, that’s exactly what is happening.”

LRB 6249, part of a legislative package unveiled earlier today by Legislative Democrats, would temporarily lift the \$500 weekly wage cap on individuals claiming unemployment insurance benefits. This reform would expand UI access to many working people who need it during this pandemic: those individuals who work full-time while also taking side jobs, those who continue to work while also developing early-stage small businesses, or workers who work multiple low-paying full-time jobs, to name but a few examples.

“This bill highlights an important fact: the economy and our benefits programs were not designed to work for working people during a pandemic where job opportunities have disappeared. During this crisis we’ve seen the wealth of billionaires and corporations continue to grow; at the same time, working families have seen opportunities vanish while bills, rent, mortgages, and daily expenses continue to come due. In a world where too many are forced to work multiple lower-paid jobs in order to put food on the table and a roof over their family’s heads, we should not be barring folks from an earned benefit because one of their scant sources of income continued to trickle in while others dried up,” added Rep. Bowen. “How can you look a single parent of two in the eye and tell them that they don’t get to receive the benefit they pay into *because* they continued to work one of three jobs after the other two closed? This bill is not only about getting people the money they deserve, it’s about economic justice. Working people work incredibly hard to earn these benefits, and they deserve full access to them at the time they need them most.”

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