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Bill Approved by State Legislature Encourages Return-To-Work

Callahan-authored legislation will help employers navigate massive worker shortage

[Madison, WI] – During Wednesday’s Assembly floor session, the State Assembly approved a proposal authored by State Representative Calvin Callahan (R-Tomahawk) that will return the state’s unemployment insurance (UI) program back to pre-pandemic operations and encourage unemployed individuals to return to work. In addition to preventing the Department of Workforce Development from waiving the work-search requirement for COVID-19 related reasons, [Assembly Bill \(AB\) 336](#) will end Wisconsin’s involvement in several federal unemployment benefit programs including the following:

- Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) Program
- Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (PEUC) Program
- Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation (FPUC) Program
- Mixed Earner Unemployment Compensation (MEUC) Program

State UI benefits provide \$370/week with the federal supplement providing an extra \$300. At 40 hours/week, this comes out to \$16.75/hr. The federal enhancers are set to expire on September 6, 2021.

“All around the 35th District and the rest of the state, you’ve probably seen Help Wanted signs in many business’ windows,” Rep. Callahan said. “We cannot allow qualified, able-bodied employees to sit on the sidelines while businesses are trying to recover from the pandemic. Many businesses are even offering increased wages and sign-on bonuses to try and incentivize potential employees to come and work for them. With summer right around the corner, and more and more folks out and about, it is essential that businesses can hire all the employees they need to operate at full strength. Employers shouldn’t have to compete with unemployment insurance.”

At least [25 other states](#) have already ended their participation in the federal UI programs. AB 336 was approved by both houses of the State Legislature and now heads to Governor Evers’ desk for his consideration.

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The 35th Assembly District includes all of Lincoln County and portions of Langlade, Marathon, Oneida, and Shawano Counties.