

HONORABLE  
**SETH M. GROVE**  
196<sup>TH</sup> LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT

**HARRISBURG OFFICE**  
7 EAST WING  
P.O. BOX 202196  
HARRISBURG, PA 17120-2196  
PHONE: (717) 783-2655

**DISTRICT OFFICE**  
2501 CATHERINE STREET  
SUITE 10  
YORK, PA 17408  
PHONE: (717) 767-3947

Website: RepGrove.com  
Twitter: @RepGrove  
Facebook.com/RepSethGrove



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Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

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July 27, 2020

Secretary W. Gerard Oleksiak  
Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry  
651 Boas Street  
Harrisburg, PA 17121

Dear Secretary Oleksiak,

I am sure you are very well aware of the myriad and inexcusable issues faced by working people and their families with regard to the difficulties and delays with the Pennsylvania Department of Labor & Industry over the past several months. People who have worked very hard their entire lives, many of whom never filed to collect unemployment compensation benefits and went many weeks without seeing a penny from the commonwealth. In my district office, we have assisted hundreds, and perhaps as many as a thousand, constituents who have faced unforgiveable and intolerable delays in the issue of monies they are entitled to receive and who were forced into unemployment through absolutely no fault of their own.

My office has heard from hundreds of constituents who have gone through saving accounts, retirement accounts, etc. and who have, as their only recourse, to wait and hope their unemployment compensation arrives.

We know of a constituent who applied for UC one week during March. He returned to work and never filed again. He continues to receive weekly checks and has now received payments in excess of \$6000. He has done everything he can think of to stop the monies from being direct deposited into his bank account. Another constituent, a college student, was to begin a job in May. The job never materialized. She filed for PUA. She has received over \$9000. It is her belief L&I back calculated her payments to March and paid her accordingly.

Rather than explaining to you my perception of this issue, allow me to use the words of a constituent who contacted my office. She very succinctly, very accurately, very observantly (and with a more-than-reasonable approach and understanding) sent the following email explaining the difficulties and realities of dealing with the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry:

*"I am certain you have received complaints from many people over the past few months concerning the Department of Labor & Industry regarding unemployment benefits. I understand that they are short-staffed and working on a substandard system. They hold virtual town hall meetings and reiterate everything on their website, and when someone asks how long they must wait for benefits the response is to call or email them. I have spent countless hours calling only to get a busy signal, and my emails go unanswered. I filed my claim for benefits 14 weeks ago, which was denied. I filed an appeal and provided additional information. My employer returned a favorable questionnaire on May 15. I have heard nothing further concerning my benefits nor my appeal. How long is one expected to wait? This is a broken system. I want to be heard and I want action on my behalf. I want the benefits that I am entitled to receive. Can you help? Thank you."*

We both know her email and her observations speak for hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of Pennsylvanians. No words I could add would be of any benefit.

The time for excuses is long past. Enough is enough. Get it fixed.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Seth Grove". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Seth Grove**  
State Representative  
196th Legislative District