



WILL BARCLAY
Minority Leader

THE ASSEMBLY
STATE OF NEW YORK
ALBANY

May 7, 2020

The Honorable Andrew Cuomo
Governor, State of New York
NY State Capitol Building
Albany, New York 12224

Dear Governor Cuomo:

During these challenging times, New Yorkers need fast, efficient government response now more than ever. Unfortunately, it appears the state Department of Labor (DOL) has failed to deliver that response, as hundreds of thousands of unemployed New Yorkers still have not received critically needed unemployment benefits.

Each day, my office has fielded calls from desperate New Yorkers wondering why it has taken weeks, or more, to receive these benefits. I am asking you to take immediate action to put money in the pockets of these hard-working men and women, who are unemployed through no fault of their own. These are unprecedented times, and the task before the DOL is formidable. However, as challenging as the increased volume in claims may be, there must be a mechanism in place to cut down the ludicrous wait for unemployment money. This agency is in drastic need of more accountability and oversight.

Especially troubling is the reality that under current conditions, these claims may be pending for several more weeks. These individuals have already waited, in some cases, months, with little information about what is happening and no apparent end in sight. Utility bills, food, emergency supplies, and myriad other expenses facing most everyone out of work have not gone away during their unemployment. By not getting them their money in a timely manner, New York State is failing them, and I implore you to do something about it.

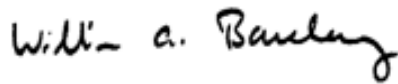
Each day, you update the nation with our state's COVID-19 response; it would be extremely helpful to dedicate time to quell some of the uncertainties surrounding this matter. I am asking you to:

- Provide daily statistics on the total number of outstanding claims and provide the average length of time those claims have been filed with the DOL;
- Update the total number of new claims filed with the DOL each day;
- Give every applicant a time estimate on how long their claim will take to be processed;
- Set a firm deadline to close all outstanding cases;

- Provide estimates of future unemployment claims based on the possibility your “New York on Pause” restrictions will be extended; and
- Submit a list of measures aimed at mitigating this ineffective government response that will lessen wait times, improve responsiveness, and deliver unemployment benefits more efficiently.

Simply put, New York needs to do better by the thousands of people suffering at the hands of bureaucratic delay and inefficient processes. These people do not deserve any more anxiety, grief, and frustration than they have already had to endure, and I sincerely hope you use the full weight of your office to help them through this time of need.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Will Barclay". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Will Barclay
Assembly Minority Leader