



May 17, 2021

The Honorable Tony Evers
Governor
Room 115 E
Wisconsin State Capitol
Madison, WI 53703

Dear Governor Evers,

If you drive through any downtown or through just about any business park in our state, you will see ubiquitous "help wanted" signs in storefronts. The inability of employers to find workers is at a crisis level in Wisconsin, threatening the viability of thousands of businesses and the income they provide for workers and their families. If immediate action is not taken, there is a great likelihood that long-term and irreversible damage will be done to Wisconsin's economy, harming employers and families alike.

To help our collective members, and give a shot in the arm to Wisconsin's economy, the undersigned trade associations are calling on your administration to return unemployment benefits in Wisconsin to what they were pre-pandemic by ending the state's participation in the enhanced federal unemployment benefits.

It is already a difficult hiring environment for employers as they face competition from each other; they must now also compete with state and federal unemployment benefits that, if not ended by your administration, will run throughout the summer months. Workforce was the biggest challenge facing Wisconsin businesses prior to the Covid-19 downturn. Now, instead of "bouncing back" from the pandemic, the Wisconsin economy is being held back by an acute labor shortage made all the worse by government interference in the marketplace.

Through September, an individual can receive \$670 per week on unemployment due to the \$300 federal enhancement. That is the equivalent of \$16.75 per hour. Our member employers tell us every single day that this expanded unemployment benefit is creating a strong disincentive to work and is making it harder for them to hire. We cannot afford to continue to have potential employees remaining on the sidelines while thousands of jobs are available today.

On behalf of employers anxious to hire, we urge you to end Wisconsin's participation in the federal pandemic-related unemployment benefit programs and transition to pre-pandemic unemployment insurance eligibility and benefits as soon as possible. Additionally, consider using Federal American Rescue Plan funds to incentivize people to return to work through sign-on bonuses, similar to plans in a number of other states.

Sincerely,

Wisconsin Manufacturers & Commerce
Alliance of Wisconsin Retailers
Associated Builders and Contractors of Wisconsin
Association of Wisconsin Tourism Attractions
Destinations Wisconsin
Wisconsin Beer Distributors Association
Wisconsin Builders Association
Wisconsin Dells Visitor & Convention Bureau, Inc.
Wisconsin Economic Development Association
Wisconsin Hotel & Lodging Association
Wisconsin Independent Businesses
Wisconsin Paper Council
Wisconsin Petroleum Marketers & Convenience Store Association
Wisconsin Ready Mixed Concrete Association
Wisconsin Restaurant Association

cc: Wisconsin Legislature