

WMC

Wisconsin's Chamber

May 11, 2021

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

Dear Governor Evers,

The inability of employers to find workers has reached a crisis level in Wisconsin. This threatens the viability of thousands of businesses and the jobs they provide for workers. If immediate action is not taken, there is a great likelihood that long-term and irreversible damage will be done to Wisconsin's economy.

While I encourage your Administration to bring back the talent attraction campaign that started in 2018, there is also a way you can assist the business community with their workforce needs immediately: by ending Wisconsin's participation in the enhanced federal unemployment benefits.

Small, medium and large businesses from every corner of the state are desperate to find workers. Manufacturers, construction firms, the hospitality sector and businesses from countless other industries are not only facing competition from other employers, now they must compete with state and federal unemployment benefits. Stimulus checks and other government aid are only exacerbating the workforce shortage.

Through September, an individual can receive \$670 per week on unemployment thanks to a \$300 federal enhancement. That is the equivalent of \$16.75 per hour. Business leaders tell us every single day that this expanded unemployment benefit is creating a strong disincentive to work and making it harder for them to hire.

We cannot afford to allow able-bodied workers to remain on the sidelines while thousands of jobs are available today.

Though economists expected one million jobs to be created in April, U.S. employers only added 266,000 jobs. In large part, this is because capable workers are being paid to sit on the sidelines. At the state level, the Job Center of Wisconsin routinely has over 100,000 job openings posted, but not nearly enough job seekers to fill those roles.

On behalf of the business community, I encourage 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.

Millions of workers are safely engaging in our economy today – we simply cannot wait until September to get workers back on the job.

Additionally, federal American Rescue Plan funds should be used to incentivize people to return to work through sign-on bonuses, similar to plans in a number of other states.

Sincerely,



Kurt Bauer
President & CEO

CC:

Wisconsin State Assembly

Wisconsin State Senate

Wisconsin Congressional Delegation