



May 17, 2021

The Honorable Dr. Tony Evers
Governor, State of Wisconsin
115 East, State Capitol
Madison, WI 53708

Dear Governor Evers and Honorable Members of the Legislature,

A *Wall Street Journal* editorial from earlier this week said it best: "...Americans are figuring out that when the government pays people not to work, millions choose not to."

The editorial was, of course, referring to the \$300 per week federal supplemental paid to Wisconsin workers already collecting state unemployment insurance (UI) benefits. To say the federal UI supplemental payments compound an existing severe labor shortage in Wisconsin is an understatement. A majority of Wisconsin businesses would call it a crisis.

Wisconsin's unemployment rate had already rebounded from the worst of the Covid-19 economic downturn by the time the American Rescue Plan was enacted, meaning the supplemental just wasn't needed. The result is that businesses are competing against government benefits that incentivize people to stay home.

As the representatives of thousands of Wisconsin businesses, we urge two actions to address this challenge, both in the short- and long-term.

First, Wisconsin should join states like Idaho, Iowa, Montana, and South Carolina in ending the \$300 per week federal UI supplemental. Instead, funds from the American Rescue Plan should be used to incentivize work by offering bonuses, similar to what is being done in the aforementioned states.

Second, Wisconsin should reinstate the talent attraction campaign started in 2018 in order to recruit workers to our state to mitigate the continuing decline in working age people, which was well documented by the 2020 Census.

Workforce was the biggest challenge facing Wisconsin businesses prior to the Covid-19 downturn. Now, instead of a bounce back from the pandemic, the Wisconsin economy is being held back by an acute labor shortage made worse by government interference in the marketplace.

On behalf of the business community, please take action for the good of the Wisconsin economy, now and well into the future.

Respectfully,

Wisconsin Chamber of Commerce Executives

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cc: Wisconsin Legislators

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