

**Congress of the United States**  
Washington, DC 20515

April 28, 2020

The Honorable Greg Abbott  
Governor of the State of Texas  
P.O. Box 12428  
Austin, Texas 78711-2428

Dear Governor Abbott:

As you are aware, the COVID-19 pandemic has caused historically unprecedented layoffs and furloughs of working Texans, resulting in unemployment insurance applications from more than 1.4 million. Despite increased federal funding to assist with the administration of unemployment claims, the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) has struggled to process and administer benefits in a timely manner. Too many Texans, desperate for financial support, are experiencing ongoing difficulties accessing the unemployment compensation system administered jointly by the U.S. Department of Labor and TWC. We are concerned that the TWC's current verification requirements are making this problem worse.

In order to continue receiving unemployment insurance disbursements, an individual is required to request payment every two weeks through what is known as "certification" or "re-certification." While this requirement can theoretically be completed online, for the many Texans still reporting online access difficulties, the only alternative is to reach TWC by phone, which remains exceedingly difficult, and which further delays payments that some have awaited for weeks.

Some workforce commissions in other states have temporarily waived this re-certification requirement. After waiver, the unemployed, all of whom have been previously approved for compensation, are still required to notify TWC if they return to work or report changes in earnings. Your support of a temporary waiver in Texas would help to ease the strain on both TWC, encouraging its more expeditious application processing, and on the many Texans currently forced to spend exasperating hours to get through phone lines and crashing online systems.

Accordingly, we respectfully urge you to request that the Texas Workforce Commission waive the two-week certification requirement for the duration of the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance and Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation programs.

Thank you for your consideration. We look forward to your prompt response.

Sincerely,



Lloyd Doggett  
Member of Congress



Eddie Bernice Johnson  
Member of Congress



Sheila Jackson Lee  
Member of Congress



Veronica Escobar  
Member of Congress



Joaquin Castro  
Member of Congress



Lizzie Fletcher  
Member of Congress



Vicente Gonzalez  
Member of Congress



Sylvia R. Garcia  
Member of Congress



Marc Veasey  
Member of Congress



Filemon Vela  
Member of Congress



Al Green  
Member of Congress



Colin Allred  
Member of Congress



Henry Cuellar  
Member of Congress