

Audit Shows Walker Jobs Agency "Too Busy" to Talk to Unemployed

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Walker's DWD blocked the calls from almost 1.7 million Wisconsin workers seeking unemployment assistance. As a result thousands of unemployed workers appear to have been forced to wait for or did not receive much-needed benefits.

MADISON - A new state report released today says the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development (DWD) call centers were too busy to answer almost 1.7 million calls from people looking to claim unemployment benefits in the year that ended June 30. The Legislative Audit Bureau issued findings showing that DWD placed people in a hold queue when call center staff were busy.

Despite being last in the Midwest for job growth, Governor Walker's DWD blocked the calls from Wisconsin workers seeking unemployment assistance. As a result thousands of unemployed workers appear to have been forced to wait for or did not receive much-needed benefits they paid for.



"At a time when families are at their most vulnerable the state should not be forcing them through an endless frustrating loop of delays and dead-end phone calls simply for trying to get the benefits they earned and paid for," said **Senator Dave Hansen (D-Green Bay)**.

In response to an increasing number of calls received from constituents who were having trouble getting through to the DWD last February, Senator Hansen and several Democratic senators wrote to Governor Walker urging him to take action to fix the problem.

"We wrote to the Governor after hearing from constituents, many of whom had been calling dozens of times per day and others spending entire days trying to get through so they could access the benefits they paid for. The audit conducted by the non-partisan Legislative Audit Bureau shows just how badly the department failed so many Wisconsin families when they needed help the most."

According to the audit since 2011 over 3.6 million calls were blocked and another million callers hung up out of frustration after being put on hold. Although the number of people filing claims declined last year the problem got worse leading to 1.7 million calls being blocked.

"This was not an unknown problem. They had years to fix it. Combined with the Governor's failure to create the jobs he promised, the fact that they didn't bother to fix the problem suggests an appalling lack of concern for the average family."

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