



WISCONSIN STATE REPRESENTATIVE

# Rob Kreibich

28TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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May 7, 2025

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## REP. ROB KREIBICH COLUMN: REPRESENTATIVE ROB KREIBICH'S BILL CRACKING DOWN ON UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE FRAUD PASSES THE ASSEMBLY

MADISON.... For far too long, scammers and ineligible individuals have taken advantage of the Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund. This theft was especially evident during the COVID-19 pandemic, when an estimated 100 to 135 billion dollars of UI benefits were lost nationally.

That is why I drafted legislation—Assembly Bill 168—to address many of the flaws and loopholes in the UI fund and ensure only eligible individuals receive the full range of benefits. This bill passed through committee swiftly, and I testified on the Assembly floor before its passage on April 22. Though this bill should be a bipartisan piece of legislation, unfortunately it passed 53-42 along party lines. The bill is now going through the Senate.

This bill has six provisions to improve the framework of the UI program.

First, it improves ID checks by verifying and authenticating claimants' identities using nationally recognized standards prior to filing a claim, similar to the standards already in use by the IRS, VA and SSA.

Second, it extends the statute of limitations from the current six years to eight years for prosecutors to pursue people who illegally obtained benefits under the 2020 CARES Act.

Third, it requires the Department of Workforce Development to provide training materials, including videos on its website and free quarterly live seminars, to employers and claimants on the UI system. This provision aims to prevent fraud before it happens rather than after.

Fourth, it requires call centers to have longer availability hours if there are spikes in the volume of calls for UI claims, allowing more individuals to talk to a live person on the phone.

Fifth, it requires the DWD to make weekly data base comparisons with state and national data bases that track death records, unemployment records, prison records, and citizenship and immigration records for the purpose of detecting UI fraud and invalid payments.



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Sixth, it requires the DWD to report to the Governor, the legislature and the UI advisory council if it suspends or reduces any method used by the department to detect fraud committed against the UI program.

This bill does not intend to eliminate the UI Trust Fund altogether. It simply ensures UI assists only Wisconsinites in need, not provide spurious checks to abusers of the system.

If you have any questions or comments, or would like to join my mailing list, please feel free to reach out to me at (608) 237-9128 or at [Rep.Kreibich@legis.wisconsin.gov](mailto:Rep.Kreibich@legis.wisconsin.gov).

*Representative Rob Kreibich represents Wisconsin's 28<sup>th</sup> Assembly District, consisting of parts of St. Croix, Pierce and Dunn Counties.*