



WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE

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Legislators Ask DWD to Reconsider Closing Northern Wisconsin Unemployment Insurance Hearing Offices

Madison - Representative Warren Petryk, Chair of the Assembly Workforce Development Committee and Representative James Edming, Chair of the Assembly Labor and Integrated Employment Committee, along with 25 other Assembly Republicans sent a letter to Department of Workforce Development (DWD) Secretary Designee Caleb Frostman asking him to reconsider the closing of the Eau Claire and Appleton Unemployment Insurance (UI) Hearings offices.

“The Unemployment Insurance system in this state is designed to help those who lose their job through no fault of their own,” said Representative Petryk. “However, sometimes disputes arise about a case, and the expectation now is my constituents or businesses will need to drive 6 hours round trip to meet with a judge. This decision to close the Eau Claire office limits Western Wisconsin, and over half the state, access to a judge.”

DWD operates four UI hearing offices in Wisconsin. By closing the Eau Claire and Appleton offices, an in-person hearing will only be available in Madison and Milwaukee. This leaves a large portion of the state with the inability to access an in-person hearing before a judge. This would include individual benefit claims and complex tax cases involving businesses.

“The department’s decision, unfortunately, appears to be part of a trend by Governor Evers’ administration to consolidate more services in Dane and Milwaukee counties,” said Representative Edming. “I hope that Secretary Designee Frostman reconsiders this decision because if it stands, it will only make it harder for folks across northern and western Wisconsin to access the unemployment insurance hearing system.”

The letter concludes by asking the Secretary Designee to reverse the decision to close the Eau Claire and Appleton offices. A copy of the signed letter can be accessed at the following link: <https://asm93-petryk.cms.legis.wisconsin.gov/media/1474/ui-hearing-office-closing-letter.pdf>

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