



# TREIG E. PRONSCHINSKE

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 92<sup>nd</sup> ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

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## Help is Available

Many of my columns recently have been about the COVID-19 outbreak and of resources that are available for those who are struggling right now. I realize this may be a bit repetitive, but it is very important to me to make sure my constituents are aware of what help is available.

My office continues to receive many questions about unemployment and the lack of a response people are getting on their claim. According to the Department of Workforce Development (DWD), in the week of March 29<sup>th</sup> the unemployment number received 2.8 million calls and could answer 497k calls. These employees are working hard and DWD continues to try to hire more workers to address this crisis. If you are able, consider applying online for unemployment at: <https://dwd.wisconsin.gov/ui/>.

For people who may be self-employed, the federal government has a program known as the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance program or PUA for short. According to DWD, "PUA temporarily expands UI eligibility to those who are otherwise ineligible for state UI benefits, including those who are self-employed, free lancers, independent contractors, and part-time workers." Applications for this program under unemployment will start April 21<sup>st</sup>. More information can be found at: <https://dwd.wisconsin.gov/uiben/pua/>.

Additionally, my bill suspending the one-week waiting period was included in the COVID-19 package that was signed into law this week.

When it comes to our agricultural industry, our farmers are hurting. As many of you may have seen in the news, farmers are returning to great depression practices such as dumping milk. It is important to support our local farmers now more than ever. Consider when you buy groceries to continue to purchase fresh food as opposed to packaged products if you can. I will let you know that the Hunger Task Force has agreed to "commit up to \$1 million to the newly created Wisconsin Dairy Recovery Program. Wisconsin dairy farmers will be paid to supply milk to farmer-owned dairy cooperative Kemps... by processing thousands of gallons of milk at its Cedarburg, Wis. facility. Hunger Task Force will distribute milk to Free & Local partner food banks and food pantries through the Hunger Relief Federation of Wisconsin, a statewide association that supports food distribution in local communities," according to the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP). While this won't help everyone, I am hoping to see more of these types of programs.



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As many of us have received our federal stimulus money, there are still many left wondering where it is. This is very important, if you did not expect to receive a refund from your 2019 taxes you must go to <https://www.irs.gov/coronavirus/economic-impact-payments> and click 'get my payment.' Have your adjusted gross income and bank information ready to enter. You should see it in your direct deposit in a few days after that.

Another huge concern we are seeing is price gouging. As the Chair of the Assembly Committee on Consumer Protection I take these concerns very seriously. Companies are allowed to sell products at cost plus 15% under an emergency like this. We have noticed this is not being followed on items that are highly sought after right now such as toilet paper, Clorox wipes, fabric and many others. If you think a company is violating this, feel free to visit [https://datcp.wi.gov/Pages/Programs\\_Services/PriceGouging.aspx](https://datcp.wi.gov/Pages/Programs_Services/PriceGouging.aspx).

I know that there are tough days ahead of us and that many of us are sacrificing left and right. Remember this will end soon and things will return to normal. In the meantime, let's enjoy time with our families.

As always, feel free to contact my office with questions, comments, or concerns.

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