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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Committee vote by WI GOP shows their contempt for unemployed Wisconsinites

Madison, WI - Unemployed Wisconsinites will now have one more barrier to overcome if they hope to collect Unemployment Insurance, owing to the ill-advised votes of Republican members of the Joint Committee on the Review of Administrative Rules (JCRAR). It is yet another example of Republicans abusing the rule-making process to make policy detrimental to their own constituents, and reveals what many who have been paying close attention have long known - Wisconsin Republicans want to make it as hard as possible for unemployed Wisconsinites to receive benefits.

We should be doing more to build up our neighbors who are struggling the most, not tear them down.

Our state was once a leader in percentage of applicants receiving benefits, but after years of Republican-backed laws adding extra steps and restrictions to the process, Wisconsin went from about half of unemployed residents receiving benefits to just over 30% [between 2007 and 2019](#). Today's action, reinstating the work search requirement, does nothing to help out of work Wisconsinites find jobs, but does make it more likely that fewer will be able to pay their bills while looking for work.

As Speaker Vos' press conference this week made painfully clear, the work search requirement wasn't what Republicans on JCRAR were truly after. They wanted to do the bidding of politicians like Ron Johnson and end the \$300/week federal Pandemic Unemployment benefit four months early, knowing full well that standard Unemployment, which comes out to a maximum of just \$9.25 per hour, is not enough for most Wisconsin families to pay their bills. And so, even as industries like entertainment and hospitality have yet to fully recover their pre-pandemic staffing levels, and being unable to undo a federal program unilaterally, they instead chose to focus on work search.

For all their table-pounding last summer when UI benefits were late in coming, in part due to a computer system they have long refused to replace, the truth is that Republicans don't actually want people to collect UI. To justify this indefensible position, they're willing to make up all manner of lies that Wisconsinites either don't want to work or are somehow refusing to return because they make more on Unemployment. In truth, no person is allowed to refuse suitable work and still collect UI, and if they make more on UI than by working, that says a

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hell of a lot more about the kinds of wages employers are willing to pay than the work ethic of our Wisconsin neighbors.

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