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Senator Feyen Statement on Unemployment Special Session

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Madison, WI – Today, Senator Dan Feyen (R-Fond du Lac), released the following statement regarding Governor Evers call for a Special Session on the ongoing unemployment issues at the Department of Workforce Development:

“Governor Evers is once again attempting to place blame on Republicans for his administration’s failures. By calling this completely unnecessary Special Session, Governor Evers wants to ram through an un-vetted proposal, without public input, just to cover for his own inept agency.

“In June, a Department of Workforce Development (DWD) spokesperson admitted the IT system was not the cause of the backlog. DWD and Governor Evers never once submitted a budget request to revamp their system and went as far as to call it “effective and efficient.” If a crumbling and failing IT system was truly the cause of the failures at DWD, why wait almost a year before calling a Special Session?

“On top of that, the Governor has had the tools to upgrade the system all along. The Legislative Fiscal Bureau released a paper outlining the multitude of appropriations at the Governor’s disposal he could have used to solve this problem. The Federal CARES Act gave the Evers Administration \$2 Billion to use at his discretion. A small portion of that amount could have been used for system upgrades. DWD originally solicited requests for proposals to make such an upgrade in 2019, yet did nothing. Why did this project get pushed to the backburner if it was such a priority for this administration?

“Prior to his firing, I spoke multiple times with then-Secretary Caleb Frostman to ask him if there was anything the Legislature could do to help. His answer was a resounding and consistent “No.”

“I remain willing and eager to do anything I can to fix the mess at DWD, but the Governor has continued to play political games with people’s lives.”

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