



Tony Evers

Office of the Governor | State of Wisconsin

June 29, 2021

TO THE HONORABLE MEMBERS OF THE ASSEMBLY:

I am vetoing Assembly Bill 336 in its entirety.

This bill would require the Department of Workforce Development to terminate participation in federal unemployment insurance programs that provide supplemental benefits in addition to regular unemployment insurance benefits, including: pandemic unemployment assistance, pandemic emergency unemployment compensation, federal pandemic unemployment compensation, and mixed earner unemployment compensation. This bill would also prohibit the department from waiving work search requirements for any reason related to COVID-19, the COVID-19 pandemic, or a public emergency related to COVID-19.

I am vetoing this bill for two reasons. First, I object to the interference and encroachment by the Legislature on the executive branch's constitutional and statutory authority to administer programs and policies, in this case, the unemployment insurance program.

Second, I am vetoing the bill because it would eliminate economic assistance for individuals whose employers or occupations have been most adversely affected by the pandemic. There is a lack of evidence to support the notion that eliminating supplemental unemployment insurance benefits would bring more individuals into the workforce. Many of the most hard-hit areas are located in both rural parts of the state that had slower pre-pandemic job growth as well as urban areas with job sectors such as hospitality or tourism that had to adapt to profound changes in business operations. Eliminating this lifeline for many Wisconsinites will cause continued economic hardships for those impacted the most by the pandemic and create additional hurdles for individuals to return to family-sustaining jobs. As a result, the entire state economy likely would be negatively affected. The Legislature needs to confront issues surrounding childcare, wages, and workplace COVID-19 safety for those returning to the workforce. Eliminating the supplemental federal benefits while simultaneously failing to address systemic problems faced by individuals remaining in and returning to the workforce is irresponsible.

Finally, with the enhanced benefits still in place, Wisconsin's labor force participation rate is higher than the national rate and the state's unemployment rate has nearly returned to pre-pandemic levels—3.9 percent—which is nearly two full points lower than the national average and among the best in the country. Wisconsinites are hard-working people, and these numbers demonstrate as much. I am opposed to changes that would have such a profound effect on our neighbors who are struggling the most.

Respectfully submitted,


Tony Evers
Governor