



STATE OF VERMONT
GENERAL ASSEMBLY

May 29, 2020

Michael A. Harrington, Interim Commissioner
Vermont Department of Labor
5 Green Mountain Drive
P.O. Box 488
Montpelier, VT 05601-0488

Dear Commissioner Harrington:

As you requested during the House Committee on Commerce and Economic Development's meeting on Tuesday May 26, we are writing on behalf of our committees to ask you to act pursuant to your authority as Commissioner to ensure that individuals who are subject to a period of disqualification from unemployment insurance (UI) benefits and would otherwise be eligible for Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) pursuant to section 2102 of Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act, Pub. L. No. 116-136 be deemed eligible for PUA benefits.

As you are aware, individuals who are currently subject to a period of disqualification from UI benefits are also being deemed ineligible for PUA benefits. Our committees understand and appreciate the importance of protecting the UI Program's integrity as well as the deterrent effect that the disqualification provisions have on UI fraud. However, because of the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting economic distress that it has caused for so many Vermonters, we believe that it is imperative to provide immediate economic assistance to out-of-work Vermonters. Therefore, we are requesting that you provide PUA benefits to individuals who are subject to a period of disqualification from UI benefits but are otherwise eligible for PUA benefits. To be clear, we are not asking you to alter, waive, or reduce any period of disqualification from regular UI benefits that has been imposed on an individual but rather to defer that period of disqualification to a future claim for UI benefits after the PUA program has expired.

Thank you in advance for your assistance on this matter and for all of the work you do on behalf of Vermont.

Sincerely,

/s/

Rep. Michael Marcotte
Orleans-2
Chair
House Committee on Commerce and Economic Development
Vermont General Assembly

Rep. Jean O'Sullivan
Chittenden-6-2
Vice Chair
House Committee on Commerce and Economic Development
Vermont General Assembly

Sen. Michael Sirotkin
Chittenden District
Chair
Senate Committee on Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs

Sen. Alison Clarkson
Windsor District
Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs

Cc: Susanne Young, Secretary of Administration