

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

April 3, 2020

The Honorable John P. Pallasch
Assistant Secretary for Employment and Training
U.S. Department of Labor
200 Constitution Ave NW
Washington, DC 20210-0001

Dear Secretary Pallasch:

We write to express our concerns regarding the lack of U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) guidance to assist states with administering the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) authorized in the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act (P.L. 116-136) in response to the current 2019 novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) outbreak.

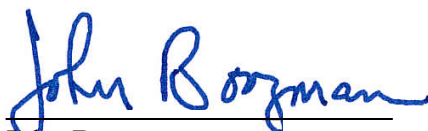
As many businesses close to adhere to social distancing policies, employees and owners of those companies are experiencing hardship from lost income. The State of Arkansas is working diligently to ensure that Arkansans adversely affected by COVID-19 are able to provide for their basic needs and sustain their families during this critical time. As legislated in the CARES Act, PUA will help bridge the gap between what a worker would receive as a paycheck and the amount that states offer in unemployment benefits.

However, states across the country, including Arkansas, are experiencing severe difficulties as they work to process the huge influx of applications they have received. Further, especially in Arkansas, they are unable to process any claims at all for certain classes of wage earners, including sole proprietors and independent contractors, because DOL has yet to provide guidance on how to comply with the PUA provisions enacted in the CARES Act.

In light of this substantial burden on affected Americans and overwhelmed state offices, it is imperative that DOL provide this guidance to states in a timely manner.

We thank you for your continued diligence to help our offices serve vulnerable Arkansans. With your help, we can positively affect the lives of those living in Arkansas and other states struggling in this unprecedented crisis. Thank you again for your consideration. We look forward to working with you to address this important issue.

Sincerely,



John Boozman
U.S. Senator

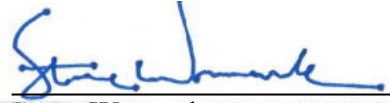


French Hill
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Rick Crawford
Member of Congress



Steve Womack
Member of Congress



Bruce Westerman
Member of Congress

CC: The Honorable Eugene Scalia, Secretary, U.S. Department of Labor