

Written Testimony- Paul Devon Flanagan

My wife and I moved to the DMV last June from Ohio, so that she could attend grad school at George Washington University. Upon moving I began a temp job for DC local government which I worked from September 2019 through the middle of Jan. 2020. I quite the temp. job because I had found new work closer to my interest at Optimus Ride in Virginia.

Like millions of other people, I was laid off at the beginning of the pandemic, specifically April 1st, 2020. My employer (Optimus Ride) instructed me to apply for unemployment in Virginia (despite living in the DC). I applied shortly after being laid off, and I was quickly denied since I did not have enough pay in the base period. I then reapplied with my combine paystubs from both the temp job I held in DC as well as my previous position in Ohio. That appeal sat for from the end of April until the end of July. We believe we only received a response because my wife had contract Representative Elenor Holmes Norton for assistance. Virginia finally sent a letter they were rejecting my claim all together and to apply again in DC or Ohio.

I choose to reapply in DC, since that is where we are currently located. DC accepted my application fairly quickly; however, I am now being rejected backpay for the months my application was not accepted because I cannot provide DC with weekly filing proof from Virginia. The number one reason I cannot provide this is because Virginia unemployment system did not give me the opportunity to do so while my claim and/or appeal was pending.

I have made numerous calls to DC unemployment office asking for another work around. I was told I would be put on a list to speak with a manager and they would call me in four business days- it has now been over three weeks and I have not received a call. I have emailed Virginia's unemployment and asked them for a letter stating that I applied but was never given the chance to file weekly.

The amount of backpay is close to \$16,000. My wife and I have tried everything we can think of to get assistance with this matter. It has been incredibly draining on our marriage and moral. The insurance system that I have been paying into for years has failed me at the time I need it most. What we could use most is a call from someone in upper management within the unemployment office who can help us work out this complicated case.

All my Best,
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