

**John Purification's Testimony Before the Committee on Labor and
Workforce Development
Wednesday, September 16th, 2020.**

Good morning. Thank you for allowing me to testify today. For the first five weeks of the pandemic, I did not receive any Unemployment Insurance. I still have not received back pay, and it has left me deep in debt.

The last day I worked was March 27th. After my layoff, I tried to go and log into my account but it shows in 2016 I somehow applied. While I had in the past, I started working again and did not need to collect UI then. As a result, I was completely locked out of my account. I tried to call the UI office and get through but never could. I would dial in at 8:30AM every morning, be on hold for 3-4 hours, and then the line would disconnect. After five weeks I finally talked to someone, and started receiving payments.

But I was told that I could not receive backpay for the first month because I had applied too late, even though I had been trying for weeks.

I have a pretty big family, a wife and two children. It was very tough for me. I am already so behind because of those weeks I missed. Between rent and my bills and credit card debt I'm in so much debt. I was affected really badly. I had never been on layoff before. Even though I had small kids, I was scared to start Ubering or something because I didn't want to get COVID.

I should have a right to the money I never received. Unemployment Insurance should be insurance for every week I am not working. While I am grateful that the Union was able to help me start getting paid, there is much more that I am owed. I hope this issue can be fixed quickly for me and all the others who have had this problem. Thank you.