

Granholm Administration Fails to Meet Needs of Unemployed Workers and Employers, Says Michigan Chamber of Commerce

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The Michigan Chamber of Commerce today called upon the State Legislature to investigate mismanagement and misplaced priorities at the Department of Energy, Labor & Economic Growth (DELEG) and the state's Unemployment Insurance Agency. The recent logjam of calls into the agency is resulting in many employees failing to receive checks or assistance with filing a new claim.

"With unemployment steadily climbing, the Unemployment Insurance Agency and Governor's office should have seen this problem and taken appropriate steps to be prepared," said Wendy Block, Director of Health Policy and Human Resources for the Michigan Chamber. "Instead, DELEG, which houses the Unemployment Insurance Agency, chose to turn its back on both employers and employees by focusing on other non-priority issues.

"DELEG continued to devote valuable resources to activities like renaming the department and developing a job killing, mandatory ergonomics rule that will further damage Michigan's economy if implemented," said Block. "Clearly, our state government's priorities are misplaced."

"Michigan's unemployment system is 100 percent employer financed, meaning payroll taxes paid by Michigan employers support both the cost of administering the Unemployment Insurance Agency and the payment of benefits to eligible unemployed workers," said Jim Holcomb, Vice President of Business Advocacy and Associate General Counsel for the Michigan Chamber. "The failure of state government to properly foresee and address this issue cannot be blamed on the state's budget woes."

"This problem lies solely at the feet of the Granholm Administration," Holcomb added.

"Although the department has promised that help is on the way, they admit it will be next month before additional staff is devoted to addressing the needs of the unemployed," noted Block. "These citizens cannot afford to be put on hold until next month."

"The Michigan Chamber urges the Legislature to promptly begin work on investigating the failings of the department and to find a quick solution to help Michigan's unemployed receive the assistance they need," Block concluded.

The Michigan Chamber of Commerce is celebrating its 50th year as a statewide business organization, now representing more than 7,100 employers, trade associations and local chambers of commerce. The Michigan Chamber was established in 1959 to be an advocate for Michigan's job providers in the legislative, political and legal process. It is only one of four state chambers of commerce in the nation accredited by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

First Call Analyst:
FCMN Contact:

SOURCE: Michigan Chamber of Commerce

CONTACT: Wendy Block of Michigan Chamber of Commerce, +1-517-371-7678

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