The Michigan Chamber Applauds House Vote to End Federal Unemployment Benefits, Get Michiganders Back to Work

LANSING, Mich., June 17, 2021 /PRNewswire/ -- The Michigan Chamber issued the following statement in response to the vote by the Michigan House today to end the Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation (FPUC) program and get Michiganders back to work. The FPUC program, which runs through Sept. 6, adds a $300 weekly payment to all eligible individuals receiving unemployment benefits. The $300 is added on top of the state's maximum weekly unemployment benefit of $362, making the maximum weekly benefit $662 per week (state/federal). This equates to $16.55 per hour (based on a 40 hour workweek) or $34,424 per year.

"While we are encouraged by the Governor's announcement today that Michigan will end its COVID-19 restrictions on June 22, we must be aggressive in addressing the ever-worsening workforce crisis. To protect our economy, and our communities, steps must be taken to break down the barriers to employability and return the 231,000 Michiganders currently on unemployment to the workforce," said Wendy Block, Vice President of Business Advocacy and Member Engagement for the Michigan Chamber. "We appreciate the leadership of the Michigan House to join 25 other states in terminating the extra $300 in federal unemployment benefits."

"Small business owners, agricultural leaders, managers in retail, hospitality, manufacturing and nearly every industry sector across our state are struggling to find job applicants and available workers," continued Block. "In fact, there are more job openings in Michigan today than Michiganders receiving unemployment benefits."

"Given the progress Michigan has made with vaccines and today's move to fully reopen the economy, now is the time to end the federal unemployment benefits and focus on returning Michiganders to work," said Rich Studley, President & CEO of the Michigan Chamber. "The truth is that there has never been a better time to enter the workforce. It is a worker's market whether you are skilled or unskilled. Job providers are raising wages, offering signing and retention bonuses, offering cash to interview and competitive benefits including job flexibility, work-from-home options, longer vacations, shorter shifts."

"New federal data released in early June illustrates the increasingly urgent need to address the everworsening workforce crisis and break down the barriers to employability," concluded Block. "The action today by the Michigan House is welcome because a new poll by the U.S. Chamber of Americans displaced by the pandemic found that one in eight (13%) who became unemployed during the pandemic and remain unemployed have turned down at least one job offer in the past year, and one in six (16%) not actively seeking work say the amount of money they are receiving from unemployment benefits and government programs makes it 'not worth looking' for jobs."

"New data suggests this policy change can help address the workforce crisis," concluded Block. "Ending the federal unemployment benefit will definitely move the needle by nudging people to consider the jobs out there and available to them."

SOURCE Michigan Chamber of Commerce

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