

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

February 16, 2022

Tiffany P. Robinson, Esq.
Maryland Secretary of Labor
500 North Calvert St.
Baltimore, MD 21202

Dear Secretary Robinson:

As members of the Maryland Congressional Delegation, we write to urge you to apply for the Unemployment Insurance (UI) Navigator Program offered by the U.S. Department of Labor to improve state unemployment insurance systems and delivery of benefits for the people of Maryland. This program is made possible by funding we supported in the American Rescue Plan Act to improve UI program administration, after the pandemic exposed severe problems with UI systems in Maryland and many other states across the country.

Unemployment Insurance is a federal-state partnership under which state UI agencies are responsible for processing claims and delivering benefits in a timely fashion. To help build a better UI system in Maryland, the American Rescue Plan has already delivered \$3,684,000 for Maryland to combat UI fraud. This funding came on top of earlier federal grants of \$2,133,900 and \$405,900 to address fraud in Maryland's Pandemic Unemployment Assistance and Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation programs, respectively.

When unemployment soared during the pandemic, our offices heard from thousands of Marylanders in dire financial situations who were unable to access their unemployment benefits; and individuals from marginalized communities faced especially severe problems. The American Rescue Plan's UI Navigator Program would help address those problems with up to \$15 million in grants for state UI agencies to partner with community-based organizations that conduct outreach and assistance to help unemployed workers navigate the UI system.


The UI Navigator Program will provide up to \$3 million in funding to each state whose application is selected. The program is intended to support access to timely benefits for all workers, and address disparities faced by historically underserved communities, such as racial and ethnic minorities, people with limited English proficiency, formerly incarcerated individuals, and residents of rural areas.

We are committed to working with you to deliver economic relief to Marylanders who are facing financial hardships. The U.S. Department of Labor encourages states to provide notice of their intent to apply by February 28, 2022, and the application deadline is March 31, 2022. We hope that Maryland will apply, and we stand ready to offer our support if you do so.

The UI Navigator Program is one of the many ways that the American Rescue Plan is helping families make it through the COVID-19 pandemic, and given the challenges that so many Marylanders faced accessing their UI benefits, this is a program that should be especially helpful

for our state. We will continue to work in Congress to enact further measures to support workers and families as we rebuild from the pandemic with a better economy that works for everyone.

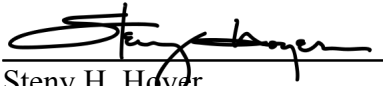
Sincerely,



Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator



Benjamin L. Cardin
United States Senator



Steny H. Hoyer
Member of Congress



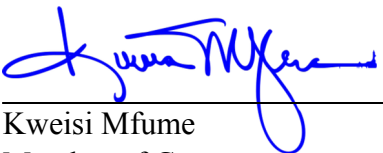
C. A. Dutch Ruppertsberger
Member of Congress



Jamie Raskin
Member of Congress



Anthony G. Brown
Member of Congress



Kweisi Mfume
Member of Congress



David J. Trone
Member of Congress



John P. Sarbanes
Member of Congress