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June 10, 2021

The Honorable Jared Polis
Governor
State of Colorado
200 E. Colfax Ave
Denver, CO 80203

Dear Governor Polis:

We write to urge you to join more than 20 governors in ending enhanced federal unemployment benefits and instead pursue a strategy that incentivizes Coloradans to return to work. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, many states completely shut down. Tens of millions of jobs were lost throughout the country, including more than 120,000 in Colorado.

Congress passed a weekly unemployment supplemental of \$600 per week which was intended to be temporary and help individuals forced out of a job until they were able to find employment. Since its initial passage, the unemployment subsidy has dropped to \$300 a week. As you know, Colorado has spent more than \$3.23 billion to date on \$300 and \$600 weekly unemployment bonuses. Recent evidence has shown that this benefit is incentivizing workers to stay home and out of the workforce.

The May jobs report demonstrated that the federal unemployment insurance supplemental is prohibiting our economy from reaching its full potential and is causing severe workforce shortages. A record 8.1 million jobs were unfilled in May and more than 100 million working-age Americans are currently not participating in the labor force. Nearly 50% of small businesses across the country reported unfilled job openings with labor shortages at the highest level ever.

Colorado is no exception and some of the hardest hit businesses across the state are having trouble filling vacant positions, whether it's in the restaurant industry, tourism, computer and mathematical fields or even healthcare. According to the Colorado Restaurant Association, 90% of Colorado restaurants reported having trouble hiring enough staff for the summer season, with 65% of operators acknowledging the primary obstacle is expanded unemployment benefits. Many larger corporations are even offering signing or interview bonuses, perks that small businesses in Grand Junction, Greeley, and Colorado Springs cannot afford.

COVID-19 cases are at their lowest level since the initial surge in March of 2020 and the Center for Disease Control has clarified that it is safe for vaccinated individuals to resume pre-pandemic life. States across the country have removed mask mandates and vaccines are available to all adults who want one. It is imperative that you join other Governors across the United States and reject the extended unemployment subsidy. This benefit was meant to provide temporary relief, not be a permanent addition to unemployment benefits.

At this critical juncture for job creators and our economy, it is imperative to connect unemployed Coloradans with job openings and ensure our business community has the available workforce to meet rising demand. The time is now. We urge you to end the enhanced unemployment insurance and get Coloradans back to work.

We thank you for your consideration of this request. Please contact us if can provide more information or be of assistance.

Sincerely,



Doug Lamborn
Member of Congress



Ken Buck
Member of Congress



Lauren Boebert
Member of Congress