

## United States Senate

May 5, 2021

Mr. Larry D. Turner  
Acting Inspector General  
U.S. Department of Labor  
Office of Inspector General  
200 Constitution Avenue, NW  
Room S-5502  
Washington, DC 20210

Dear Mr. Turner:

Last week, I sent a letter<sup>1</sup> to U.S. Department of Labor Secretary Marty Walsh requesting information on the Department's plans to combat fraud and abuse of enhanced federal unemployment benefits. As our nation works to reopen and get Americans back on the job, many small businesses in Florida and across the nation are struggling to hire enough people to meet demand and keep their doors open due to enhanced unemployment benefits.

While I am encouraged to see the Office of Inspector General (OIG) is initiating an audit<sup>2</sup> of the Department's oversight of Unemployment Insurance (UI) integrity activities, there is still work to do, and your attention to this matter is of the utmost importance.

I understand that current law prohibits workers who refuse suitable work from receiving unemployment benefits. Current law also prohibits workers from remaining on unemployment simply because benefits pay them more than what they would earn after returning to work. My expectation is that the Department, and your office, continue to do everything possible to help Americans that are struggling while ensuring the integrity of the UI system and that all laws are being followed.

I want to reiterate several of my questions to Secretary Walsh as the OIG's oversight and investigations of these matters is critically important. I hope to understand how the Department is working to prevent, detect and address UI fraud, waste and abuse, and to what extent the OIG's findings and recommendations are being appropriately implemented. I respectfully request answers to the following questions:

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.rickscott.senate.gov/sen-rick-scott-dept-labor-fight-fraud-and-abuse-get-americans-back-work>

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.oig.dol.gov/public/oaprojects/ETA%E2%80%99s%20Oversight%20of%20UI%20Integrity%20for%20CARES%20Act%20Programs%20Eng%20Ltr\\_041921.pdf](https://www.oig.dol.gov/public/oaprojects/ETA%E2%80%99s%20Oversight%20of%20UI%20Integrity%20for%20CARES%20Act%20Programs%20Eng%20Ltr_041921.pdf)

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- What is the Department's approach to actively identifying incidences of fraud where people, who have refused a suitable offer of work, continue to receive unemployment benefits in violation of current law? Has the OIG found any defects in the Department's UI integrity review process? Please explain the Department's process and how the Department works with states and other federal agencies to stop this type of unemployment fraud.
- Section 2102 of the CARES Act of 2020 (Pub. L.116-136) established several criteria by which people could qualify and receive unemployment benefits under the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) program if they do not or no longer qualify for their state's unemployment insurance benefit program. Please explain how the Department monitors and verifies that PUA recipients satisfy, and continue to satisfy, the eligibility requirements set forth by the CARES Act. What controls have been put in place to prevent and curb fraud within this new federal PUA program?
- What actions has the Department taken, or plans to take, to improve accountability and oversight across the entire unemployment benefit system and reduce fraud, waste and abuse, particularly when it comes to identity theft and impersonation? Has the OIG previously provided recommendations to the Department to address these types of issues? Were these recommendations accepted and implemented?
- I further request a briefing for my office on the scope of your current and recently completed audits or investigations related to UI integrity. Once any open and relevant audits are complete, please provide an update, along with any written findings or reports.

Thank you for your efforts to ensure integrity in the UI system and for working to make sure those who are eligible and entitled to these benefits continue to receive them in a timely and efficient manner. We must continue to work together to support small businesses and do everything possible to get Americans back to work.

Sincerely,



Rick Scott  
United States Senator