



GOVERNOR ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER

July 28, 2009

California Unemployment Insurance Appeals Board
2400 Venture Oaks Way
Sacramento, California 95833

Dear Board Members,

As you know, during the past year California's unemployment insurance program has faced unprecedented challenges. During this economic downturn, unemployment in California has increased to 11.6 percent, and the backlog of claims at the Unemployment Insurance Appeals Board have risen to 82,500. As I previously stated in my unemployment proclamation of April 17, 2009, the economic impacts on Californians and their communities have reached a state of emergency. It is essential to ensure that claims for unemployment insurance benefits are handled as quickly as possible.

I recognize and applaud the significant steps that the Board and the Employment Development Department have taken to expand operations in response to the exponential increase in demand for their services. However, as I have repeatedly stated, now more than ever it is essential for every state program to critically evaluate its processes to deliver services to the public in the most efficient manner possible with the limited resources available.

Past practices and agreements have permitted the Board's administrative law judges to perform some of their work at their homes rather than reporting to their offices. I am also aware that administrative law judges were contractually limited in the maximum number of cases that could be assigned to them during their work week, unlike any other administrative law judges in the state. The Board's current backlog and resulting delay in resolving claims make it abundantly clear that these practices have not functioned in a manner that promotes the public's interests. Allowing administrative law judges to work from their homes unreasonably restricts the type of work they are able to perform and renders them unavailable to respond to unemployed workers trying to resolve their claims. Similarly, the artificial limitation on the number of cases which the administrative law judges may be assigned during a week deprives the Board of its ability to hear and resolve appeals or explore alternative scheduling processes that may yield greater efficiencies.

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It is imperative that the Board take immediate action to eliminate these proven obstacles to the public interest. I am asking you to take immediate action to ensure your administrative law judges provide maximum resources to the public by working in the office and to eliminate maximum work standards, which limit the administrative law judges' productivity. I sincerely thank you for your efforts to date in responding to the unemployment insurance crisis and am convinced that these additional necessary measures will play a significant role in reducing the delays in delivering this vital benefit to Californians.

Sincerely,



Arnold Schwarzenegger

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