



NORTH CAROLINA GENERAL ASSEMBLY

NORTH CAROLINA SENATE

August 11, 2020

Governor Roy Cooper
20301 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699

VIA ELECTRONIC DELIVERY

Dear Governor Cooper,

We write to inform you that when the legislature returns on September 2, we intend to take necessary steps to ensure funding of the full state cost share to accept President Trump's offer of disaster-related unemployment assistance benefits.

The legislature will take any needed steps to authorize the state cost share for unemployment benefits, which will be matched by \$300 per week in additional benefits from the federal government. As you know, those on unemployment assistance currently receive \$0 per week in supplemental benefits.

We urge you to immediately begin preparations for issuing the \$300-per-week federal supplemental unemployment benefits and to immediately submit the required 424 application to FEMA to access the federal funds. FEMA provided guidance on the application process last night.

Starting the preparations for the supplemental benefits now will speed up the process once the state obtains necessary approvals. We've heard from citizens across the state that waited months to get their first unemployment payments because your Division of Employment Security wasn't prepared to administer the program.

We urge you to accept the federal offer and implement the supplemental payments. The unemployed in North Carolina currently receive \$0 in supplemental benefits; accepting President Trump's offer means they will receive an additional \$300 per week in federal supplemental benefits.

We also note that you, through a spokesperson, objected to the President's decision to use a federal disaster relief account to fund unemployment benefits.

But Disaster Unemployment Assistance is usually offered by FEMA as a matter of course following declared disasters like hurricanes. Your own administration accepted Disaster Unemployment Assistance from FEMA after previous hurricanes and even encouraged North Carolinians to apply for it.

Our state is clearly in the midst of a disaster – in fact, it is the declaration of disaster that grants you the emergency authority you’ve exercised during the last five months.

That you would accept Disaster Unemployment Assistance in other disasters but object to similar assistance during this disaster only fuels concern that you may withhold \$300 per week to the unemployed so as not to give President Trump credit.

We urge you to follow the same path you have in previous disasters by accepting federal unemployment assistance. The legislature will vote on any necessary cost share when we return on September 2 to provide the people we represent with additional unemployment benefits.

Sincerely,



Senator Phil Berger



Speaker Tim Moore