



101ST DISTRICT  
STATE CAPITOL  
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MICHIGAN HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

**JACK O'MALLEY**  
STATE REPRESENTATIVE

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Director Julia Dale  
Unemployment Insurance Agency  
Cadillac Place  
3024 W Grand Blvd  
Detroit, MI 48202

Dear Director Dale,

Over the last several months I have seen an alarming rise in the number of constituents contacting my office regarding overpayment issues with UIA. In each case, the person is being informed that they supposedly owe the UIA thousands or tens of thousands of dollars. Understandably, this is alarming and stressful, as this is certainly no small amount of money. In many cases, by the time my office is notified, it is several months after the initial Overpayment Notice is received by the claimant and they have become panicked as UIA threatens to garnish their wages.

The COVID-19 pandemic was a trying time for everyone in our state. The closures of several sectors of our economy caused a massive surge in those applying for unemployment benefits like we've never seen before. Pandemic specific measures only added to the pile by allowing self-employed people and gig workers to apply for benefits they previously wouldn't have qualified for. Now, the people who have received these benefits are being unfairly told to pay back money they don't have – the result of a mistake that isn't theirs. All the communications from UIA at the time of the pandemic told these people they were eligible.

Right now, the only way for a claimant to resolve their overpayment issue is to file a protest with UIA. Frequently, this process takes several months and the threatening letters from UIA persist despite the guarantees made by faceless and nameless individuals on the other end of the phone. It seems fair to say that a proactive step needs to be taken to resolve this lingering issue: the burden should not rest on the individual claimants to resolve an issue due to a mistake made by the state. I would ask that UIA determine which claimants who received an overpayment notice are eligible to have the overpayment waived and waive their outstanding balance, and then send a "legal letter" to the claimant notifying them in writing that their overpayment issue has been resolved and they do not owe the state.

We should not force the citizens to do the leg work to fix the mistakes of the government. It's time we take a proactive step to resolve this issue so the people can get back to their jobs and stop doing ours.

Sincerely,

Jack O'Malley  
State Representative  
101<sup>st</sup> House District