



ISAAC B. "ZAC" BEARS  
City Councilor

# City of Medford

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July 26, 2021

Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund Commission  
24 Beacon Street  
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Senator Jehlen, Representative Cutler, and members of the commission,

Thank you for your service and for this opportunity to submit written testimony regarding unemployment insurance (UI) reform. I write to you regarding two issues, funding structures for UI and the resource starvation of the Department of Unemployment Assistance.

All stakeholders are in agreement that the revenue and benefit structure of the state's UI financial structure requires significant reform. However, that must not come in the form of using federal pandemic assistance funds to pay off debts. Unemployment insurance is an essential lifeline for thousands of families in Massachusetts and here in Medford. [Benefits must be increased and revenues must be stabilized in an equitable way](#), not by using valuable ARPA funds to pay down and subsidize the privately incurred debts of large and wealthy institutions.

I implore you to use federal pandemic assistance funds to support public education, health and human services, and transit infrastructure. We can fix UI by ending the regressive tax structure and ensuring that high earners and large corporations are truly paying their fair share to fund the Commonwealth's UI system.

Over the past 18 months, I have become very familiar with the failures of the Department of Unemployment Assistance to adequately administer UI. Thousands of families across the state could not receive benefits when they needed them the most, and this is due to a deeply underfunded DUA, overworked staff, and an antiquated and broken online infrastructure. Any UI reform must address the need for additional funding, staff, and capital improvements for DUA to make sure our UI system truly serves the people of our Commonwealth.

Sincerely,  
Isaac B. "Zac" Bears  
Medford City Councilor