



# HAWAII WORKERS CENTER

[hawaiiworkerscenter.org](http://hawaiiworkerscenter.org) | (503) WORKERS | (503) 967-5377 | [hiworkerscenter@gmail.com](mailto:hiworkerscenter@gmail.com)

September 2, 2021

Lt. Governor Josh Green  
State Capitol  
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Dear Lt. Governor Green:

We have been dismayed by the State's poor and ineffective response to the needs of thousands of unemployed or furloughed workers since April, 2020. Many are low-wage workers or immigrants who are now struggling to sustain themselves and their families. They hail from working class communities which have been hardest hit by the Covid pandemic.

The State's Department of Labor and Industrial Relations, after 17 months of keeping its offices closed and refusing to provide direct in-person services and assistance to unemployed workers needing to file claims, recently announced that it would reopen its offices on September 7, 2021, but last week announced that it would not do so.

This has added to the stress and suffering of claimants, many of whom have had to wait for many months to get through to the offices and then wait for months more to receive benefits. This is unconscionable.

We have met virtually with the DLIR Director Ferreira-Eustaquio and have written her several letters urging the following: 1) open up UI offices statewide for direct, in-person services; 2) have a more responsive call center and email response system; and 3) modernize and improve the barely functional, archaic DLIR computer mainframe. Almost all our letters and requests to meet with her to discuss alternatives have gone unanswered.

We are therefore requesting to meet with you at your earliest possible convenience and can do so virtually if not in person. It is time for the state to affirm that assistance and processing of payments to unemployed workers is an ESSENTIAL service—like banking, shopping, and medical needs—and it can be provided at minimum risk to the DLIR workers and the claimants with the proper safeguards in place.

Late last year, we transmitted a petition to the Governor and the DLIR urging that these urgent measures be taken but received no response. We look forward to meeting with you to discuss these matters. Please call Rev. Sam Domingo at 384-8701 or John Witeck, 347-3306, to arrange a meeting.

Sincerely, and with urgency,

John Witeck, for the Hawaii Workers Center



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Governor David Ige  
State Capitol  
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

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