



Struggle-La-Lucha.org

Unemployed Workers Union condemns halt of federal benefits

written by Unemployed Workers Union
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Unemployed Workers Union weekly clinic in Baltimore, May 27. SLL photo

June 2 — We condemn Maryland Gov. Larry Hogan's abrupt decision to curtail federal pandemic unemployment benefits early, giving the unemployed just one

month's notice. Just weeks earlier, the State Labor Department said that Maryland would not be joining states that returned federal benefits.

Looking beyond the false rhetoric that "benefits are keeping people from taking jobs" are the facts. The April jobs figures were deeply disappointing. [Dow Jones estimated one million new jobs](#); instead, [new jobs totaled only 266,000](#).

The national unemployment rate inched up to 6.1%; Maryland's is slightly higher at 6.2%. Baltimore City is 7.6% and Prince George's County is 8%.

We assert that the motive for removing the meager federal safety net (which costs the state nothing) is to create an ever-larger and desperate group of unemployed workers that will push wages and benefits down for all workers.

It is the responsibility of the government to protect and defend all of its people. It is reprehensible for the state government to leave workers at the mercy of the so-called "market" rather than planning for decent-paying jobs, dignity and economic stability for everyone.

Where is the "Public Works Program"? Is the Labor Department opening up its doors and providing training and job placement?

Insult to injury: People have not received benefits

The Peoples Power Assembly has filed two separate "Freedom of Information Requests" with the state. The first is to provide our organization with the number of people who have yet to receive unemployment benefits through the Beacon system, whether state or federal, and the second is to give the number of people who received the one-time grant while their benefits were delayed.

To date, we have heard from no one who has received the state benefit. Instead, we have heard horror stories from people who have not received a dime of their

benefits, despite applying a year ago.

The Peoples Power Assembly has launched the Maryland [Unemployed Workers Union](#) to help fight for our rights and obtain our state and CARES Act benefits. Together and united, we can win! We want jobs or income now! Halt evictions, foreclosures and repossessions for all unemployed workers.

Every Thursday, from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m., we hold a clinic for unemployed workers to file formal grievances and appeals. A pro bono attorney and assistants are present to fill out grievances and execute letters to the labor secretary and governor.

Join us in front of our office at 2011 N. Charles Street, Baltimore, MD 21218. We assemble outdoors, in front of the office, and masked for everyone's comfort and safety. The clinic takes place rain or shine. If our tents are not adequate, we will meet inside and maintain social distance.

We realize that people who live outside the Baltimore metropolitan area cannot make it in person. Please let us know, and we will arrange a zoom call. Text (410) 218-4835 with your email, telephone number and information.

