May 18, 2020

The Honorable Phil Ting
Chair, Assembly Budget Committee
State Capitol, Room 6026

RE: Request to Continue $600/Week Unemployment Benefit Payment from August 1 to December 31, 2020

Dear Chair Ting:

I am writing to request a one-time budget appropriation to continue the supplemental $600/week unemployment benefit from the beginning of August, which is when the federal program expires, until the end of December this year.

The COVID-19 pandemic has displaced many workers and businesses, leading to financial woes beyond predictions. California is close to reaching an unemployment rate of 25 percent with the Employment Development Department (EDD) reporting 4.7 million processed unemployment claims. With all of the uncertainties due to the pandemic, things could get worse. Working families are struggling to keep up with their rent, pay their mortgage, and put food on the table. Some are on the verge of homelessness, and an analysis by a Columbia University professor, Dr. Brendan O’Flaherty predicted that our homelessness number will increase by 45 percent.

While the CARES Act passed by the federal government provided some relief for those struggling, the $600/week additional unemployment supplement will expire on July 31 this year. Many will continue to need more support as the recession continues, and jobs are in jeopardy. By continuing the payment, California will help keep many in their homes, provide security to families, and prevent many Californians from becoming part of the homelessness statistics. The support will help carry hardworking people through a few more months and hopefully until they can return to their jobs or secure other jobs.
Thank you for your time and consideration on this important matter. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to me at (916) 319-2025.

Sincerely,

KANSEN CHU
Assemblymember, 25th District

Cc:
Members of Assembly Budget Committee Sub. 1
Nicole Vazquez, Deputy Chief Consultant, Assembly Budget Committee