



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

## Ritchie Launches Online Petition Demanding Fix to Department of Labor Disaster

PATTY RITCHIE May 8, 2020



**\*\*\*[CLICK HERE TO SIGN THE PETITION](#)\*\*\***

After receiving thousands of phone calls from constituents struggling to file for unemployment benefits, Senator Patty Ritchie is launching an online petition demanding the state take immediate action to fix the unemployment system and address claims of those who have been waiting—in many cases for nearly two months—for payment or answers from the New York State Department of Labor.

Those wishing to sign the petition can do so at [www.fixDOLdisaster.com](http://www.fixDOLdisaster.com). Supporters are also encouraged to share the petition on social media with the hashtag, #fixtheDOLdisaster.

“I fully understand these are unprecedented times and that the New York State Department of Labor (DOL) is under immense pressure,” said Senator Ritchie. “However, hundreds of the people contacting my office filed claims nearly two months ago and have yet to see a dime—or even get a call back—from DOL. With every day that passes it becomes more apparent that there are major issues with the system. This issue, and the struggle of these people, needs more attention.”

In addition to people waiting months for their claims to be processed, many people have expressed other frustrations about their experience with applying for benefits. Recently, people have reached out to Senator Ritchie to share that they have received the personal information of other people in the mail from DOL, including their Social Security numbers.

Others have been hung up on after being put on hold for lengthy amounts of time or have waited 6-8 weeks for a simple callback, after being promised a return phone call from DOL within 72 hours. Those who have received calls have shared that representatives say they are unable to assist because they are working from home and that people need to “be patient.”

In recent days, Governor Cuomo has enlisted the help of industry titans such as Bloomberg, Gates, and Schmidt to address issues relating to health care, the economy and education. On Thursday, Senator Ritchie released a statement calling for DOL Commissioner Roberta Reardon to step aside, and requested the Governor’s administration appoint an individual with a similar cache to lead an effort to address the backlog and get money in the hands of hardworking New Yorkers immediately. In response, the Governor’s spokesman offered no answers or solutions and **instead, called Senator Ritchie a “cheap politician.”**

“People are suffering—and now is not the time for name-calling,” said Senator Ritchie. “Now is the time for action. Every day I’m talking to people who filed in March but haven’t seen a dime yet. They have been left in limbo and it breaks my heart. The state needs to step up and take action immediately to address this major issue.”