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May 5, 2020

The Honorable Tom Wolf, Governor  
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
508 Main Capitol Building  
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Dear Governor Wolf,

After listening to your Secretary of Labor & Industry, W. Gerald Oleksiak, at today's joint hearing of the Senate Labor & Industry and Communications & Technology Committees, I am compelled to ask that you request his resignation or remove him from this position. His management of the Department leading up to and during this response to the COVID-19 pandemic can only be described as a failure. I heard excuses and blame, but not the leadership and action that is needed at the helm of the Department of Labor & Industry.

I was someone from the outset who had deep concerns about the dysfunction and mismanagement of the Department and I opposed Mr. Oleksiak's nomination to be Secretary in 2017 because I did not believe his resume had the technical and operations experience to hold agency management accountable for results and improve service quality for taxpayers.

Today, I am outraged at the Department's continued inability to process the benefits rightly owed to my frustrated constituents calling my office as a direct result of this state's action shutting down their employment. I am outraged we learned today the Secretary was having internal discussions about the pandemic's potential impacts on the Department in January yet there was no mention of any such impacts or preparations during the Senate Appropriations Committee hearing on February 24. I am disappointed that, in response to my direct question, the Secretary focused on defending himself but said nothing about what has been learned from this experience nor laid out a concrete plan and timelines for helping the 1.7 million unemployed Pennsylvanians.

The Department has squandered a historic period of low unemployment to make the fundamental, systemic changes needed, and once again, like so many times before, Pennsylvanians have been disserved by a government bureaucracy that rewards political favoritism over competence and merit. Please correct this deficiency immediately.

Sincerely,

  
John M. DiSanto