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Assembly
California Legislature

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COMMITTEES
CHAIR, BUDGET SUBCOMMITTEE
NO. 1 ON HEALTH
BUDGET
BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONS
HEALTH
INSURANCE

February 12, 2026

Joint Legislative Audit Committee
1020 N Street, Room 107
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Request for Audit of Employment Development Department. UPDATED: 5/1/26

Dear Members of the Committee:

The purpose of this letter is to request an emergency audit of the Employment Development Department's (EDD) and its performance since the COVID-19 pandemic. This audit is of the utmost importance due to urgent concerns regarding the Employment Development Department's (EDD) persistent failure to communicate effectively with Californians in need.

For several years, EDD-related issues have constituted a disproportionate share of constituent casework across legislative district offices. In Assembly District 30 alone, since December 2022, district staff have assisted more than 650 Central Coast residents and recovered critical benefits averaging $750,000 annually from 2023 through 2025. This experience is not unique. Many district offices reported that half of the constituent inquiries they process annually are related to issues stemming from EDD.

Beyond the sheer volume, the nature of these cases is deeply troubling. Constituents typically reach out to their legislators only after exhausting every available option. They have often spent days, weeks, or months attempting to contact EDD directly. Too frequently, they are never able to speak with an EDD representative at all. This lack of responsiveness causes severe financial hardship and significant emotional distress for individuals and families who are already vulnerable.

In 2025, legislative staff also began experiencing substantial delays in EDD's legislative assistance portal, with cases taking far longer to be assigned and resolved than in previous years. These delays have real consequences, directly impacting families who depend on timely benefits to meet basic needs including rent, utilities, and groceries.

I understand that this is not the first audit request regarding EDD's performance. Previously, my colleagues in the Legislature in 2020 called for a similar audit–raising

substantively similar questions to those that I detail below. Despite that request, and the suggestions provided by the State Auditor at the time, we have yet to see long-term improvement.

Ultimately, EDD's continued non-responsiveness raises serious questions: Why are response times worsening, and what specific actions will EDD take to reverse this trend? If EDD reliably answered calls and addressed issues in a timely manner, many of these cases would be resolved expeditiously. The ongoing failure to do so raises legitimate concerns about whether taxpayer resources are being used effectively.

Accordingly, an audit, if approved, will shed necessary light on the immediate, concrete steps that must be taken to significantly improve response times for both constituents and legislative staff. Californians must be able to rely on a government that works, especially in moments of financial crisis. Responsiveness is not optional; it is fundamental to public service.

If approved, I ask the California State Auditor to conduct an audit of EDD's response and procedural efficiency, targeting the following objectives:

Audit Objectives

1. Assess the procedural and technological reforms that EDD has implemented since 2020 and the COVID-19 pandemic, including adopting suggested reforms from the State Auditor from previous audits.

2. Assess new and persistent reasons for backlogged unemployment insurance claims (claims) and the effectiveness of EDD's efforts and timeframes for eliminating the backlog, including, but not limited to technological issues, and state or federal laws that have contributed to the delay or prevent EDD from processing claims faster.

3. Evaluate the effectiveness of EDD's actions to improve call center performance and response time. This evaluation should also include EDD's hiring, onboarding, and training efforts to increase call center staffing levels. It should also include additional barriers for Californians, such as language options.

4. Determine the magnitude of EDD's claims workload, including the number and percentage of claims that were approved, denied, pending, and backlogged since 2020, with a particular emphasis on claims since the COVID-19 pandemic.

5. Determine the amount of money that was withheld from Californians due to backlogged casework, and the average duration it took to recoup that money.

6. Assess EDD's call center capacity and determine trends in the volume of calls received, the time it takes EDD to respond to callers, the percentage of callers connected to a representative, and the number of calls during which the caller was disconnected from the call.

7. Evaluate the technological infrastructure that EDD uses to process claims and track dollars owed to Californians, and how that technology has evolved since the COVID-19 pandemic.

8. Provide suggestions on streamlining casework so that Californians who rely on EDD can receive payments in a more timely manner.

I trust that EDD is capable of implementing an efficient, results-driven system that delivers timely assistance. To assist EDD, I ask that JLAC consider this audit request so they can implement the most critical and timely reforms.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. We look forward to your prompt response.

Sincerely,

Assemblymember, 30th District

Assemblymember, 1st District

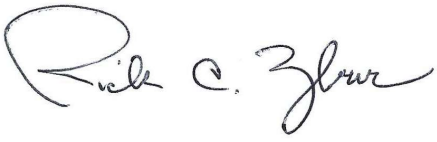
Assemblymember, 5th District

Assemblymember, 58th district

Assemblymember, 20th District

Assemblymember, 48th District

Assemblymember, 50th District



Assemblymember, 51st District