

# Lawmakers must reject Unemployment Bridge Program

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As a freelancer for 12 years, I'm opposed to the Unemployment Bridge Program. Freelancers are not employees but small business owners with multiple clients and streams of revenue. We shouldn't qualify for unemployment. When we lose a client, we're not "let go." A changing client base is the nature of any small business.

I started my career as an academic editor in an employee role. As a freelancer, I purposely expanded my business to all kinds of writing clients. I had to diversify to ensure that if I lose one client, I don't lose all my income.

Those pushing the Unemployment Bridge Program are comparing freelancers to undocumented workers and people reentering the workforce after incarceration. This is like comparing apples to aardvarks. Freelancers are small business owners; we do not have a single employer (or even a single client).

Freelancers, like all businesses, need to keep cash reserves for emergencies. When I was horribly sick for weeks with COVID-19, I used rainy-day savings to contribute to my two-income household. Of course, I didn't plan on a rainy day turning into rainy weeks. But I saved for such an emergency. Professional freelancers know this type of savings is a necessity.

Being laid off or furloughed by a traditional employer are the only situations in which someone should be eligible for unemployment. Freelancers do not experience either of those things. Another reason lawmakers should reject the Unemployment Bridge Program is because it would blur the legal line between employees and independent contractors.

Freelancers understand the responsibilities that go with owning a small business. For this reason, I urge lawmakers to reject the Unemployment Bridge Program.

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