
News Release

Service Canada not living up to Employment Insurance processing deadlines: MP Gerry Byrne

Ottawa, ON (April 30, 2009) – Calling it “Dis-Service Canada”, Liberal MP Gerry Byrne is taking issue with the amount of time it’s taking the federal government department in charge of Employment Insurance to process applications from the unemployed.

“Ten weeks is eight weeks too long”, Byrne said. “It is now taking up to ten full weeks from the time an unemployed worker files an EI claim to when they are notified that they have met the eligibility criteria and will soon be in receipt of a cheque. And that’s for a straight forward claim. You can add even more delays if the person experienced different circumstances such as being forced to resign their work due to harassment or any other complicated situation. Then you’re talking months. For this government to do this to our unemployed at this time is a complete sign of their managerial incompetence in dealing with the downturn in the economy. Something has to be done.”

Byrne blamed a continuing shortage of staff to process claims, an unfair distribution of regional processing centres, and a processing system that has generally failed to work since changes were implemented two years ago.

“Claims are still being sent out of the province and promises of a claims processing centre for Corner Brook were never fulfilled”, Byrne said.

“The federal government is acting like it is a private business in every aspect except in its accountability to its shareholders, the taxpayers of Canada and the people who pay into the Employment Insurance system and whose own money the Service Canada minister and senior managers are preventing them from getting when they are owed it. There has to be a shakeup at the top.

Ten weeks is a ridiculous amount of time. Two weeks and no more, that is what it should take.”

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