

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

July 2, 2020

The Honorable Eugene Scalia
Secretary
U.S. Department of Labor
200 Constitution Ave NW
Washington, DC 20210

Dear Secretary Scalia:

We are following up on Congressman Sablan's letter of June 12 regarding Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) eligibility for workers in the Marianas affected by the coronavirus pandemic.

Three months after passage of the CARES Act, none of the workers in the Marianas have received the assistance that Congress provided. We understand that the Commonwealth's lack of an existing unemployment insurance system required the construction of the PUA application and the mechanism for distribution from the ground up. But individuals residing in the Marianas, by and large, do not have the financial resources to live without income for months.

There must be a greater sense of urgency on the part of your Department and the Commonwealth government to disburse the PUA payments. Please, let us know what you can do – and how we can help – to get this assistance in to the hands of those who have been without work now for three months. Further delay is unacceptable.

We are also including a copy of a letter from House Ways and Means Committee Chair Richard Neal and Senate Finance Committee Ranking Member Ron Wyden, whose committees were responsible for creating the PUA and FPUC programs in the CARES Act. The letter confirms the position Congressman Sablan set out in his June 12 letter, that all workers in the Marianas, out of work because of the virus, are eligible for PUA and FPUC.

Thank you for your prompt reply.

Sincerely,



Gregorio Kilili Camacho Sablan
Vice Chair for Insular Affairs
House Committee on Natural Resources



Raúl M. Grijalva
Chair
House Committee on Natural Resources



Robert C. "Bobby" Scott
Chair
House Committee on Education and Labor