



PAID NOT TO WORK:

Federal Benefits and Bonuses Are Keeping Maine Workers Home

THE PROBLEM: NEW FEDERAL PROVISIONS HAVE GREATLY EXPANDED UNEMPLOYMENT AND OTHER BENEFITS



Congress has doubled down on this benefits expansion **with a \$300 weekly UI bonus** combined with tax credits and other benefits.



There are still **nearly 25,000 fewer Mainers in the labor force** compared to before the pandemic.

THE REALITY: INCREASED FEDERAL BENEFITS PAY TO STAY HOME

Mainers **can receive \$3,750 per month** (\$44,994 per year) in cash or cash-equivalent benefits by remaining unemployed.



How much does it pay to be unemployed?
More than **\$22 per hour**

These Mainers **could receive another \$1,672 per month** (\$20,064 per year) in non-cash benefits, such as Medicaid, for a total of **\$5,422 per month** (\$65,064 per year).

More than 60 percent of these cash benefits are **due to the UI payments and the UI bonus.**



Cash/Cash Equivalent Programs	
UI Bonus	\$1,300
Average State UI	\$1,023
Child Tax Credits	\$600
Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)	\$468
Food Stamps	\$359
MONTHLY TOTAL	\$3,750

Based on a low-income Mainer with two children under the age of six.



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THE IMPACT: THE BENEFITS FROM STAYING HOME ARE MORE LUCRATIVE THAN WORKING



Unemployed Mainers can **receive more in cash and cash-equivalent benefits by staying home** instead of returning to work.



New Biden-issued guidance **allows even more Mainers to remain on unemployment and refuse work offers.**



Maine businesses are desperate for workers, with an **estimated 34,000 job openings** currently unfilled.

	Earnings from Work	Monthly Cash Benefits to Stay Home	Percent Difference
Monthly Earnings of a Full-Time Maine Worker Earning Minimum Wage	\$2,106	\$3,750	78 percent
Median Monthly Earnings of a Full-Time Maine Worker	\$3,371	\$3,750	11 percent

THE BOTTOM LINE

Federal lawmakers should reject additional benefit expansions.

Federal policymakers should **push back on Biden's welfare-for-all agenda.**

If the UI bonuses don't expire on time, **those on unemployment could receive extra UI benefits for roughly 80 weeks**—pushing the debate to 2022.

To unleash the economic recovery, **new and enhanced benefit programs—like the federal UI bonus and child tax credit—should be allowed to expire on time.**

Calculations based on original FGA analysis using data from various government and nonprofit sources.