



PAID NOT TO WORK:

Federal Benefits and Bonuses Are Keeping Montana Workers Home

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



2020 saw a massive expansion in federal welfare and other benefit programs, including a **\$600 weekly unemployment insurance (UI) bonus**.



Congress has doubled down on this benefits expansion and **resurrected a \$300 weekly UI bonus**.



There are still **nearly 10,000 fewer Montanans in the labor force** compared to before the pandemic.

THE REALITY: INCREASED FEDERAL BENEFITS PAY TO STAY HOME

Montanans can receive

\$3,629 per month

(\$43,548 per year) in cash or cash-equivalent benefits by remaining unemployed.



How much does it pay to be unemployed?

More than \$21 per hour

These Montanans could receive *another*

\$1,643 per month

(\$19,716 per year) in non-cash benefits, such as Medicaid, for a total of **\$5,272 per month** (\$63,264 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	\$828
Child Tax Credits	\$600
Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)	\$484
Food Stamps	\$418
MONTHLY TOTAL	\$3,629

Based on a low-income Montanan with two children under age six.

A Montana worker earning minimum wage **would have to work 24 hours a day for nearly six days a week** to equal the total value of all benefits.



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



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



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



Montana businesses are desperate for workers, with an **estimated 29,000 job openings** currently unfilled.

	Earnings from Work	Monthly Cash Benefits to Stay Home	Percent Difference
Monthly Earnings of a Full-Time Montana Worker Earning Minimum Wage	\$1,517	\$3,629	139 percent
Median Monthly Earnings of a Full-Time Montana Worker	\$3,155	\$3,629	15 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.