

Elik Calls For Public Hearings, Audit Reveals Illinois Paid \$1.8 Billion In Fraudulent Claims

June 17 2022 11:55 AM



ALTON -A new [audit](#) reveals Illinois paid out nearly \$2 billion in fraudulent pandemic unemployment claims by the Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES), State Representative Amy Elik (R-Fosterburg) is joining her colleagues in calling for immediate hearings into the operations at the troubled agency.

According to State Representative Amy Elik, “\$2 billion dollars is a lot of money for the state to lose, the public needs to know how this happened and figure out a way fast to make sure this does not happen again. This is why I am calling for immediate legislative hearings so we can hold IDES accountable and get our questions answered.”

The Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) program was created to help people not usually covered by unemployment insurance, like gig workers and those who are self-employed, but according to a new audit, more than half of the money IDES paid out from a special pandemic unemployment fund went to the pockets of fraudsters instead of unemployed Illinoisans desperately in need of relief. The audit found that out of a total of \$3.6 billion in Pandemic Unemployment Assistance funds paid out between July 2020 and June 2021, nearly \$1.9 billion was tied to fraud.

IDES has previously been criticized for failing to make use of free resources to fight fraud that were made available before the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, and for being slow to develop processes to prevent fraud.

Rep. Elik added, “The unemployment agency was warned this could be a problem, it’s troubling this state agency didn’t do enough to safeguard this money which resulted in \$2 billion dollars being paid to fraudsters.”