

Prepared Testimony of

Elena Cross

Nominee for Membership to the
Unemployment Compensation Board of Review

Before the
Pennsylvania Senate
Labor & Industry Committee

Presented: October 25, 2022

Thank you, Chairwoman Bartolotta, Chairwoman Tartaglione, and honorable members of the Senate Labor & Industry Committee for your time today. I am Elena Cross, and I appreciate the opportunity to appear before you as a nominee to the Unemployment Compensation Board of Review.

I would like to begin by thanking Governor Tom Wolf for nominating me to serve in this role. I am grateful for the Governor's support in this nomination and throughout my time serving in the Wolf Administration.

I joined the Governor's Office at the beginning of Governor Wolf's first term and now serve as Chief of Staff managing, at the direction of the Governor, the operations and staff of the Cabinet and executive offices. Before my current role, I was the Governor's Deputy Chief of Staff who worked with the Department of Labor & Industry on unemployment compensation matters and labor-related issues. During that time, I gained an understanding of the Unemployment Compensation (UC) system and worked on projects to improve customer service and speed to reach UC application determinations.

The UC system serves to support Pennsylvania's workers during times of need. During the pandemic, with a historic number of claims received, the system faced challenges and lessons were learned on ways it can be improved to better assist claimants in receiving the benefits they deserve. The Wolf Administration has worked to reduce barriers and provide equitable access to the UC system and has sought to make determinations in a timely manner. This experience and knowledge will allow me to meaningfully contribute to the UC process.

The UC Board of Review serves an important function for parties in adjudicating appeals from decisions of referees concerning UC benefits and through the promulgation of rules governing proceedings before referees and the Board. The appeal process and the Board review

is a vital part of the UC process for claimants or employers who disagree with a UC referee's decision on an initial appeal to have the right to file a further appeal to the Board allowing parties a fair opportunity to make their claim.

I look forward to continuing to serve the Commonwealth and commit to serve with transparency, integrity, and fairness if confirmed. Thank you, again, for your consideration of my nomination, and I am happy to answer any questions you may have for me.