

**Testimony of Fanny Jones**  
**Performance Oversight Hearing: Business, Consumer and Regulatory Affairs**  
**March 7, 2016**

My name is Fanny Jones. I have lived in and owned a home in Southwest, DC in Ward 6 for more than fifteen years. Until recently, I worked for sixteen years as an education coordinator for a child care center. I worked directly with children aged 3 months to five years old. I really enjoyed making a difference in the children's lives and for their families, especially for the parents who spoke Spanish like me.

I lost my job in November 2015. I applied for unemployment benefits on December 16, 2015. My claim was denied and I had to go through an appeal process with a lawyer. I won my appeal on February 16, 2016 – almost three weeks ago – but I still have not received any of my benefits. I have been contacting DOES several times a week on the phone and in person, but they just tell me to “wait another 7 to 10 days,” even though I have already waited.

When my benefits finally come through, I will be receiving \$359 per week. If DC raised the maximum weekly benefit amount to \$430 per week, I would be eligible for about \$420 per week based on my past earnings at the childcare center. An extra \$70 per week would make a huge difference for me.

In my family, we are living on only one income – my husband's. Since I lost my job, we tried to cut down as much as we can on our expenses. For example, we tried to cut down on our utilities but it has been very cold lately so we need to use the heat, which is part of the electric bill. We have a mortgage of \$2,244 per month. We had to use all our savings to pay for our mortgage. I don't have any savings left and I'm worried about how I will pay my mortgage this month. I thought about cutting off my cell phone service to save money, but this is my primary phone number for looking for a job, so it would only hurt me to not have a cell phone.

I have been looking for work each week but I have not found anything yet. Most of the companies I contact say they do not have any positions available. It is discouraging.

I hope DC will raise unemployment benefits to help people like me who lose their jobs unexpectedly and need more from DOES to help them pay their bills while they are unemployed.