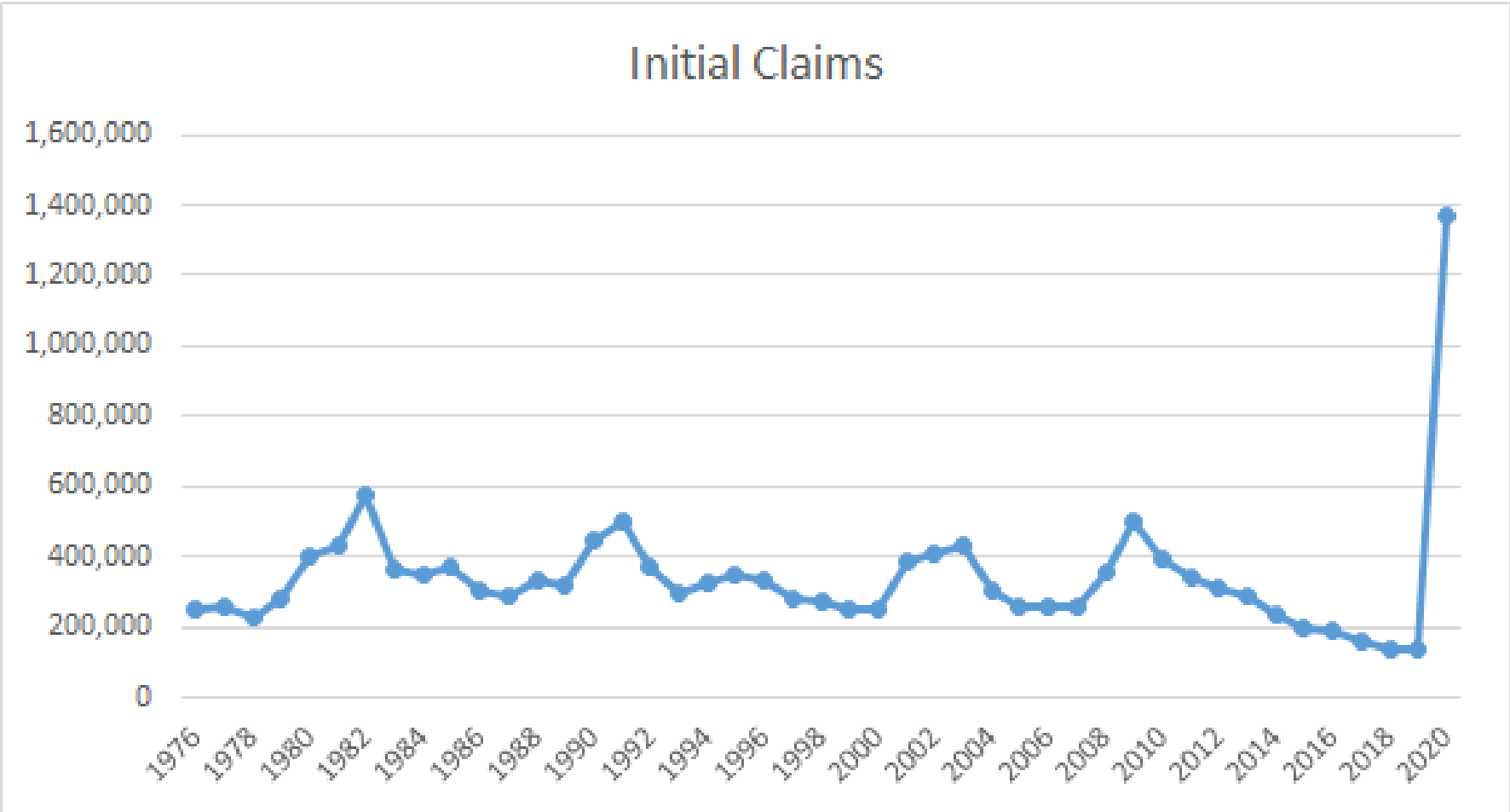


Virginia Employment Commission (VEC) Update for House Appropriations Committee

January 20, 2021
Commissioner Ellen Marie Hess



Historic Overview of Initial Claims Data



Status on Payments & Claims for the week ending January 16, 2021

- ▶ **\$10.1 Billion in benefits** have been paid since March 15, 2020.
- ▶ **1.4 million initial claims** filed since January 2020.
- ▶ This is **10 times** the number of claims for the entire year of 2019.
- ▶ **Less than 20,000** separation hearings pending payment remain.

Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund

| | |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|
| January 1, 2020 Balance | \$1.45 Billion |
| Current Balance | \$63.3 Million |
| Projected 2021 Year End Balance | \$394.8 Million |

- ▶ The agency anticipates intermittent borrowing throughout 2021 to support ongoing benefits payments.
- ▶ Congress has waived interest on federal borrowing until March 13th.

Federal Programs Update: “Continued Assistance to Unemployed Workers Act of 2020” extends benefits 11 weeks, until March 13, 2021

- ▶ The Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) provides benefits for individuals who are not eligible for traditional UI and cannot work for a COVID-19 related reason.
- ▶ Claimants may be eligible for up to an additional 11 weeks of benefits.
- ▶ Changes to the PUA application include proof of employment and verification of identity.

Federal Programs Update: “Continued Assistance to Unemployed Workers Act of 2020” extends benefits 11 weeks, until March 13, 2021

- ▶ The Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (PEUC) provides extended benefits to individuals who have exhausted their initial claim.
- ▶ Claimants, who have not exhausted their original 13 weeks of PEUC, may claim additional weeks.
- ▶ Claimants, who have exhausted their original 13 weeks of PEUC, may be eligible for up to an additional 11 weeks of benefits.

Budget Amendments

- ▶ Interest payment on Trust Fund Borrowing:
Revised interest estimate \$750,000.
Highly dependent on duration and severity of ongoing economic impact from COVID-19.
- ▶ Technology funding for UI Modernization (\$5.0 million):
To support final changes for 3rd and final phase of project.
Projected go live in late 2021.
- ▶ Customer Service Funding (\$10.0 million):
To support ongoing customer service needs through FY 2022.
Dedicated to call center and claims processing teams.

What's Next

- ▶ Workforce initiatives and re-employment.
- ▶ Service expansion in Virginia.
- ▶ Potential additional programs at the federal level.

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