Californians working in low-paying industries were more likely to lose their jobs since the COVID-19 economic crisis began. Low-paying industries saw a 26.8% decline in jobs from February to April, a loss of over 1.5 million private-sector jobs. This accounts for roughly 62% of private-sector jobs lost.

Many workers in industries with the most jobs lost were already struggling before the COVID-19 downturn. The average weekly earnings for workers in the leisure and hospitality industry – primarily restaurant and hotel workers – in February 2020 was $548, or about $28,500 annually, well below the income a family needs to meet basic needs.

Unemployment benefits and federal recovery rebates are helping many people who’ve lost work – but not undocumented Californians. State leaders can help those left out of federal relief by partially replacing their lost wages and ending their exclusion from state refundable tax credits, which will help many Californians whose earnings declined during the COVID-19 crisis.