

## MEMORANDUM

**TO: National Employment Law Project & Half In Ten Campaign**  
**FROM: Guy Molyneux, Hart Research Associates**  
**DATE: November 15, 2010**  
**RE: Key Findings From Survey On UI Benefits**

From November 5 to 8, 2010, Hart Research Associates conducted a telephone survey among 802 registered voters across the country. The survey's margin of error is  $\pm 3.5$  percentage points for the full sample, and it is higher among subgroups. This memorandum outlines this poll's key findings on voters' views of federal unemployment benefits.

### Public Support For Continuing Unemployment Benefits

- By a strong majority of 60% to 37%, voters support Congress continuing unemployment benefits for workers who have exhausted their state unemployment benefits but still cannot find a job.
  - Voters across the country express deep support for continuing the unemployment benefits, with a strong majority (55% or higher) in each region favoring its continuation.
  - Politically, aside from receiving overwhelming support from Democrats (79%), independents (63%) also strongly support UI benefits extension. Republican support is weaker at 38%.
  - Support for extending UI benefits cuts across socioeconomic lines, as those with a college education (57%) and those without (61%) both strongly support the benefits. A majority of white college graduates (53%) and non-college graduates (58%) support continuation as well.
  - While white voters show strong support for continuing the benefits (56%), even larger majorities of African-Americans (79%) and Hispanics (68%) want to see Congress extend the federal unemployment benefit program.

### Voters Reject Deficit Argument To Cut Benefits

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- Voters reject the idea that it is time to cut back support for the unemployed due to the country's deficit problems. Seventy-three percent (73%) of voters say that with the unemployment rate at 9.6% and millions still out of work, it is too early to cut back benefits to those who have lost their job. Only 24% believe that a trillion-dollar deficit is a reason to start cutting back unemployment benefits. In addition, by more than four to one, those who feel strongly that it is too early to cut back (47%) outnumber those who feel strongly that we do need to start cutting back (11%).
  - Democrats and independents overwhelmingly support the idea that it is too early to cut benefits (83% and 80%, respectively), while a majority of Republicans agree (55%). In addition, 57% of Republican voters in the 2010 midterm elections reject the idea it is time to cut benefits.
  - Higher socioeconomic voters do not accept the idea that we should cut back benefits to unemployment due to the deficit, as 72% of college graduates and 74% of those making more than \$50,000 a year agree that it is too early to cut benefits.
  - Voters in all regions of the country support continuing to provide benefits instead of cutting them due to the deficit, especially in the South (78%).

### Voters Support Benefits Until Unemployment Rate Lowers

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- Voters not only believe that it is too early to cut benefits, but they have a specific idea of how long the benefits should go on: until the unemployment rate improves significantly. Two-thirds (67%) of voters say they want the government to provide benefits until the unemployment rate comes down substantially, while only 27% say we should not continue to provide benefits.
  - An overwhelming proportion of Democrats (82%) and independents (70%), and a plurality of Republicans (49%) want to see a decline in the unemployment rate before changing benefits. A majority (54%) of midterm Republican voters agree.
  - Majorities across region, educational achievement, and income levels believe the government should continue to provide benefits until the unemployment situation improves.