



National Employment Law Project

From the National Employment Law Project

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**NELP STATEMENT ON PASSAGE OF UNEMPLOYMENT
INSURANCE EXTENSION**

Washington, DC – The National Employment Law Project released the following statement today after Congress passed a standalone bill to continue unemployment insurance extensions through the end of November.

“It is profoundly overdue, but the extension of jobless benefits today is an essential next step in restoring the economy and helping millions of Americans who are out of work through no fault of their own. We commend Congressional leadership for not giving up on this issue and persisting until it finally got passed. At the same time, it is deeply frustrating that such persistence was required to pass a measure that is at once so simple but so essential to struggling families and a recovering economy,” said **Christine Owens, Executive Director of the National Employment Law Project.**

“A majority of U.S. Senators and Representatives tried repeatedly over weeks and months to renew the unemployment insurance programs that jobless Americans are relying on. For months, however, the Senate was unable to pass this vital measure, as opponents railed against emergency spending for the unemployed at the same time they called for deficit-exploding tax cuts for the nation’s wealthiest,” said Owens.

“Opponents of unemployment insurance extensions have pushed the laughable notion that these benefits are causing today’s high unemployment – despite the reality that there are nearly five jobless workers for every opening. Opponents have said that people prefer to stay on UI rather than work – even though unemployment checks pay just \$310 per week, while the average job more than doubles that. The economy and job creation are the public’s top concerns, and the thing unemployed workers want more than anything is a job. To suggest otherwise is not only wrong – it belittles the work ethic and ambitions of millions of Americans,” Owens said.

“There is still a long, long road ahead before the unemployment rate will drop significantly. As long as the jobs crisis continues, we need jobless benefits both as a safety net for people out of work, and as a powerful way to fuel consumer spending and save jobs. We are glad to see this legislation finally pass and relieved that the millions of workers cut off in the 51 days since a minority of members of Congress blocked renewal of these programs can now keep contributing to the economy and put food on the table,” said Owens.

For state and national figures on how many jobless workers have been cut off benefits since the programs expired, click here: <http://www.nelp.org/page/-/UI/2010/july.2010.exhaustions.pdf>.

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