

The End of the Road for the Gulf Coast Families Left Jobless By the Hurricanes Unless Congress Extends & Increases Jobless Benefits by March



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Major Findings

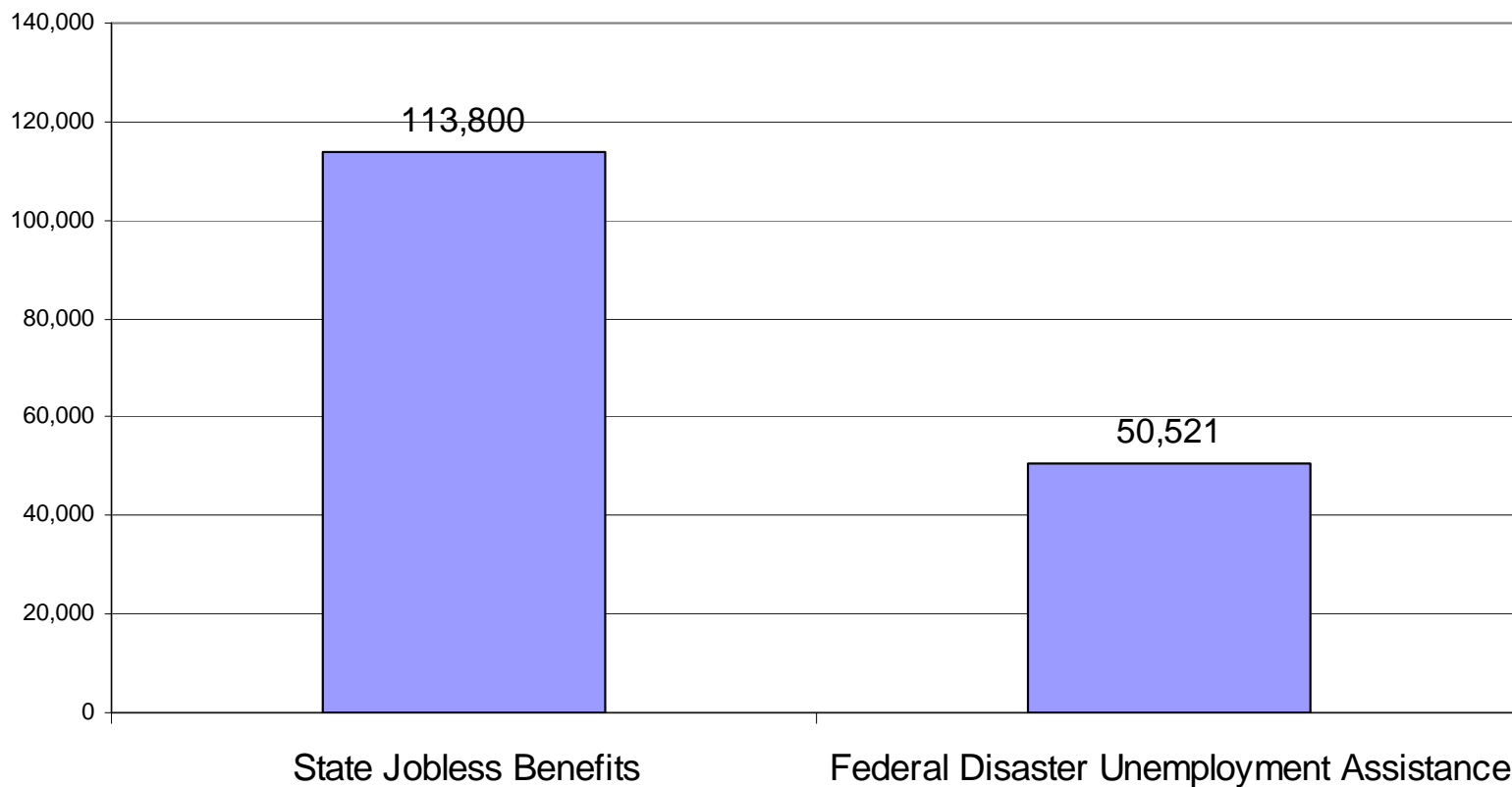
- About 165,000 Gulf Coast workers left jobless by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita will run out of their limited 26 weeks of jobless benefits in March unless Congress extends their assistance.
- About 114,000 workers will reach the end of their regular state unemployment benefits in March, as will another 50,000 workers who are collecting federal disaster unemployment assistance (DUA). (DUA is the federal program that covers the self-employed and others who do not qualify for state unemployment benefits.)
- Louisiana workers, representing 63% of all the jobless claims due to expire in March, receive the 2nd lowest state benefits in the nation averaging \$189 a week in state unemployment benefits (and \$100 a week for those collecting DUA).
- Thus, Congress should also increase the amount of jobless benefits especially for Louisiana families, half of whom must survive on limited Louisiana benefits though they now live out-of-state while the other half face rising living costs in New Orleans, Baton Rouge and elsewhere in the state.



165,000 Gulf Coast Workers Left Without Regular Income When Jobless Benefits Expire in March

- An estimated 165,000 workers left jobless by Hurricanes Katrina & Rita will run out of their 26 weeks of jobless benefits in March.
- Those collecting jobless benefits related to Hurricane Rita account for about 15% of the total (or 25,000).
- The totals are based on actual figures of those now collecting state jobless benefits and federal disaster unemployment assistance. The estimate adjusts the total state claims to account for those that are not related to the hurricanes.
- Louisiana accounts for 63% of those workers (over 100,000) whose jobless benefits will end next month, compared to 25% for Mississippi (over 40,000) and 12% for Texas (about 20,000).
- Nearly half (49%) of the Louisiana workers whose jobless benefits will expire now reside out-of-state.

Numbers Unemployed By Hurricanes Katrina & Rita Whose Jobless Benefits Expire in March



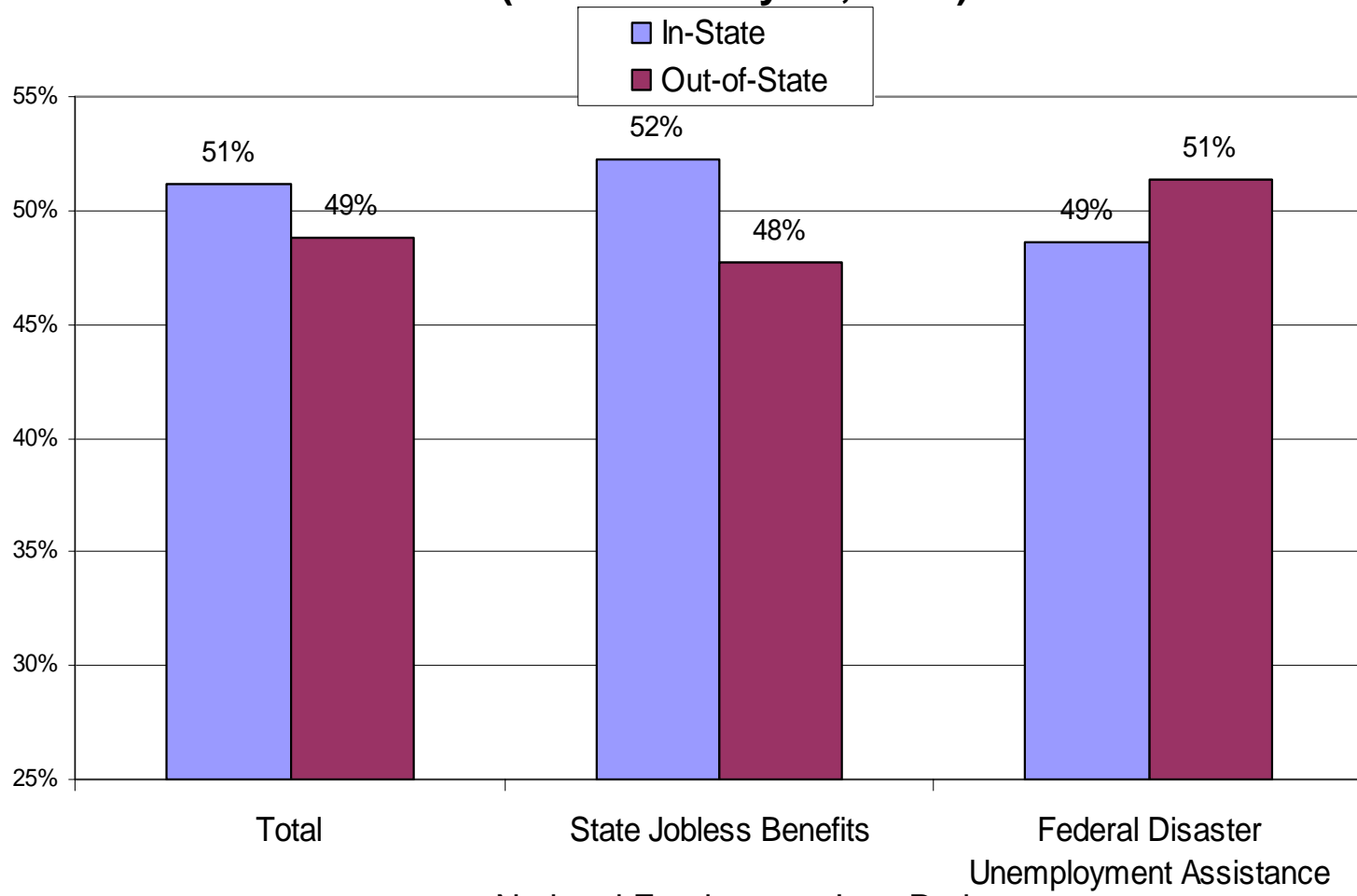
State Totals of Those Unemployed By Both Hurricanes Katrina & Rita Whose Jobless Benefits Expire in March

	State Jobless Benefits (Estimate)	Federal Disaster Unemployment Assistance (Actual Figures, as of January 21, 2006)	Total
Alabama	Not Available	250	250
Louisiana	68,400	35,594	103,994
Mississippi	28,000	12,499	40,499
Texas	17,400	2,178	19,578
Total	113,800	50,521	164,321

State Totals of Those Unemployed By Hurricane Katrina Whose Jobless Benefits Expire in March

	State Jobless Benefits (Estimate)	Federal Disaster Unemployment Assistance (Actual Figures, as of January 21, 2006)	Total
Alabama	Not available	250	250
Louisiana	64,700	34,047	98,747
Mississippi	28,000	12,499	40,499
Total	92,700	46,796	139,496

Percent of Louisiana Workers Collecting Jobless Benefits Who Reside In-State Versus Out-of-State (as of January 21, 2006)

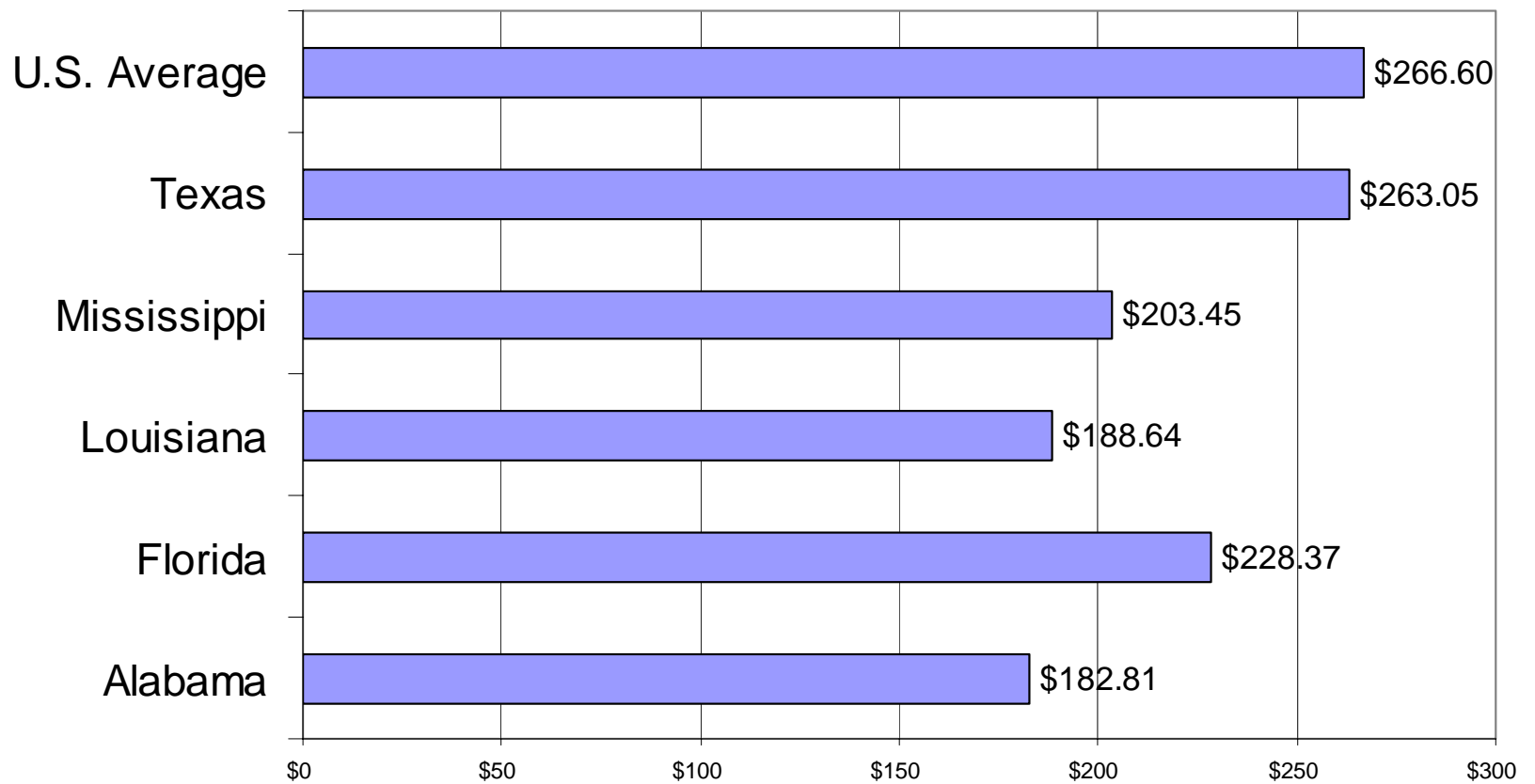




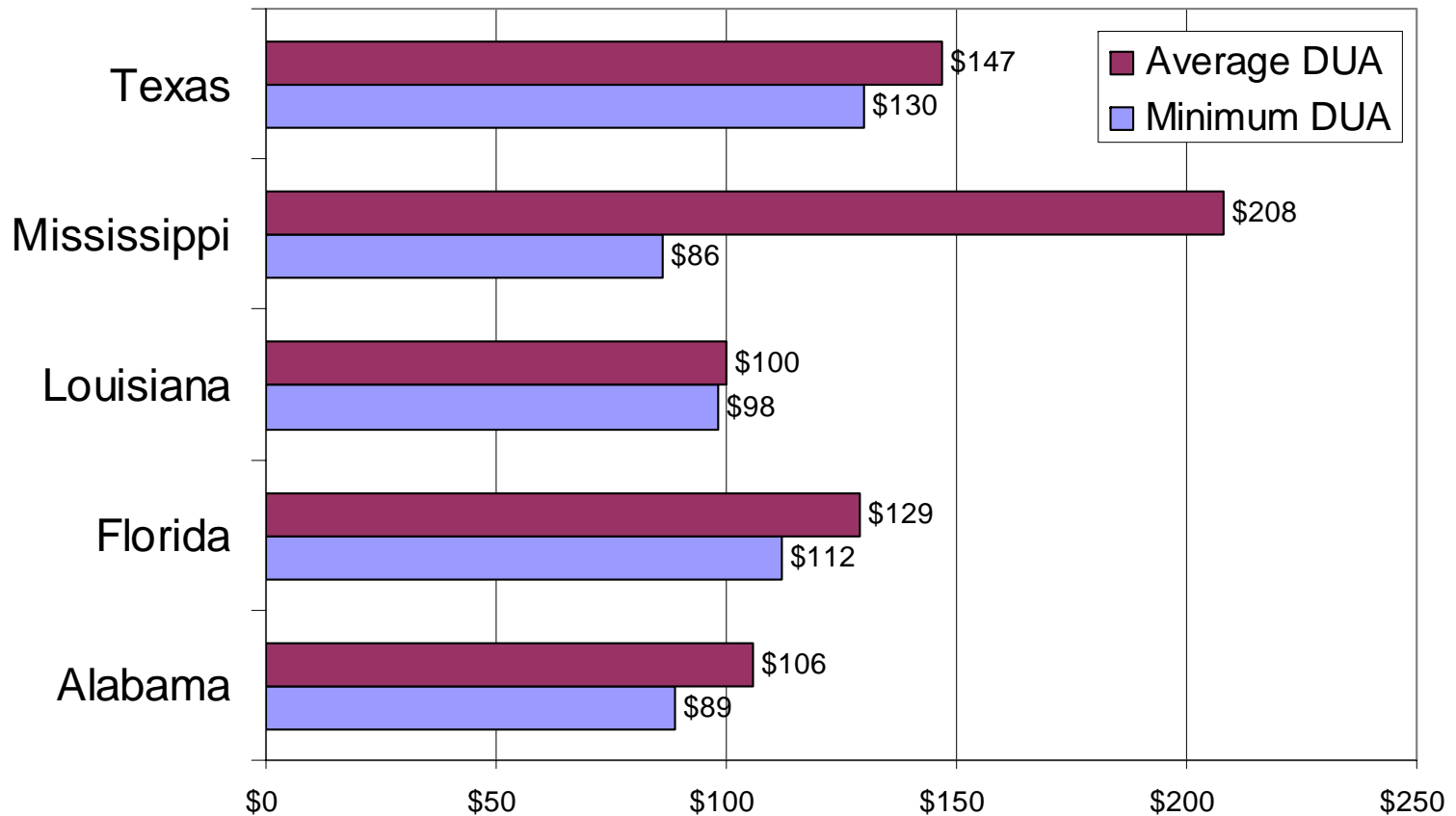
Record Low Jobless Benefits in Louisiana, Mississippi and Other Gulf Coast States

- Louisiana's average state jobless benefits ranked 2nd lowest in the nation in December (\$188.64 a week) behind Alabama. Mississippi ranked 5th lowest in the nation (\$203.45), compared to the national average of \$267.
- The average worker collecting federal disaster unemployment assistance in Louisiana receives only \$100 a week, far less compared to the other major Gulf Coast states hit by the storms. (The amount of DUA benefits is based on the levels set by each state's unemployment insurance laws.)
- With half of all Louisiana workers on jobless benefits residing out-of-state and the other half facing major increases in living costs in Baton Rouge, New Orleans and other parts of the state, Louisiana's record low benefits create a special hardship for these families.

Average Weekly Amount of Regular State Jobless Benefits (December 2005)



Average Weekly Amount of Federal Disaster Unemployment Assistance (DUA) (November 2005)





Bi-Partisan Support in Congress to Extend Regular State Jobless Benefits

- Absent prompt Congressional action, all those collecting state jobless benefits due to Hurricane Katrina will run out of their limited 26 weeks of assistance on March 11th.
- According to Republican Congressman Jim McCrery of Louisiana, a 13-week extension of regular jobless benefits was “ready to go” in October. “All we need is the green light from the leadership,” said McCrery, who also chairs the House committee that has jurisdiction over the unemployment program. (Quoting *Daily Labor Report*, September 29, 2005).
- Congress should also increase the amount of state jobless benefits, especially for Louisiana families whose benefits rank 2nd lowest in the nation. (For example, H.R. 3774 would both extend state unemployment benefits by 13 weeks, and increase benefits by 25% or \$100, whichever amount is greater).



Bi-Partisan Support in Congress to Extend & Increase Federal Disaster Jobless Benefits

- Absent prompt Congressional action, all those collecting federal disaster unemployment assistance (DUA) as a result of Hurricane Katrina will run out of their limited 26 weeks of benefits on March 4th. (Hurricane Rita claims will end March 25th).
- Bi-partisan measures have already passed both the House and Senate FEMA committees approving extended DUA benefits and providing a necessary increase in the amount of weekly benefits.
 - House bill (H.R. 4438) provides 26 weeks of additional DUA, while increasing the minimum benefit to \$135 a week (compared to Louisiana's \$98 minimum DUA benefit)
 - Senate bill (S.1777) provides up to 13 weeks of additional DUA, while increasing the minimum benefit to \$135 a week.