



From the National Employment Law Project
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Senate Extends Jobless Benefits 14-20 Weeks

After Much Delay, Unanimous Vote Prompts House to Approve Bill Quickly & Send to President

600,000 Jobless Have Exhausted Benefits in Last Two Months; 1.3 Million Exhaustions Projected by End of 2009

Washington, DC – After weeks of delay, today the Senate voted 98-0 to extend jobless benefits by 14 weeks for every state and an additional 6 weeks, for a total of 20 weeks, in high-unemployment states where the jobless rate exceeds 8.5%. The strong bi-partisan vote marks a major breakthrough for the nation’s unemployed as 600,000 workers exhausted their unemployment benefits in September and October, and a total of 1.3 million are expected to exhaust their benefits by the end of the year.

The Senate’s enthusiastic vote sets the stage for the House to quickly approve the extension and send it to the President this week for swift enactment.

“The Senate has approved strong legislation at a critical time. A stunning 600,000 workers ran out of jobless benefits in the past two months alone, and thousands more are projected to by the end of the year. Workers need this extension, the economy needs this extension – and that means the House needs to approve the Senate bill and send it to President Obama in a matter of days. Workers waited too long for this moment, and they – nor the economy – can afford to wait a moment longer,” said **Christine Owens, Executive Director of the National Employment Law Project.**

The Senate’s extension, part of the “Worker Homeownership and Business Assistance Act of 2009,” comes nearly [one month](#) after the Senate first introduced the proposal and [multiple legislative delays](#) that stalled the bill as more and more workers exhausted benefits on a daily basis.

The legislation would be fully paid for by a two-year continuation of an unemployment insurance surtax on employers— \$14 per worker annually— that has been in place for 30 years.

With long-term unemployment at a [record high](#), the maximum number of weeks of jobless benefits to date has been 79 weeks -- 26 weeks of regular state benefits plus up to 53 weeks under the two federal extensions previously passed (Emergency Unemployment Compensation and Extended

Benefits). The federal extension weeks have varied by state, from 20-53 weeks, according to each state's unemployment level. (A NELP chart is available illustrating the breakdown by state).

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Total Weeks of Federal Jobless Benefits Available by State Under the November Federal Extension
National Employment Law Project, November 2009

State	Unemployment Rate (3-Month Average as of September 2009)	Current Weeks of Federal Extensions	Additional Weeks under the November Extension	Total Weeks of Federal Extensions
Alabama	10.4	53	20	73
Alaska	8.2	53	14	67
Arizona	9.1	53	20	73
Arkansas	7.2	33	14	47
California	12.1	53	20	73
Colorado	7.4	46	14	60
Connecticut	8.1	46	14	60
Delaware	8.2	53	14	67
District of Columbia	11.0	53	20	73
Florida	10.9	53	20	73
Georgia	10.2	53	20	73
Hawaii	7.1	33	14	47
Idaho	8.8	53	20	73
Illinois	10.3	53	20	73
Indiana	10.0	53	20	73
Iowa	6.6	33	14	47
Kansas	7.2	46	14	60
Kentucky	11.0	53	20	73
Louisiana	7.5	33	14	47
Maine	8.5	53	20	73
Maryland	7.2	33	14	47
Massachusetts	9.1	53	20	73
Michigan	15.2	53	20	73
Minnesota	7.8	53	14	67
Mississippi	9.5	33	20	53
Missouri	9.4	53	20	73
Montana	6.7	33	14	47
Nebraska	5.0	20	14	34
Nevada	13.0	53	20	73
New Hampshire	7.0	46	14	60
New Jersey	9.6	53	20	73
New Mexico	7.4	46	14	60
New York	8.8	53	20	73
North Carolina	10.9	53	20	73
North Dakota	4.2	20	14	34
Ohio	10.7	53	20	73
Oklahoma	6.7	33	14	47
Oregon	11.8	53	20	73
Pennsylvania	8.6	53	20	73
Puerto Rico	15.6	46	20	66
Rhode Island	12.8	53	20	73
South Carolina	11.6	53	20	73
South Dakota	4.9	20	14	34
Tennessee	10.7	53	20	73
Texas	8.0	46	14	60
Utah	6.1	33	14	47
Vermont	6.8	46	14	60
Virgin Islands	6.9	33	14	47
Virginia	6.7	46	14	60
Washington	9.1	53	20	73
West Virginia	8.9	53	20	73
Wisconsin	8.7	53	20	73
Wyoming	6.6	33	14	47

EB and EUC status are as of November 1, 2009, with the exception of South Carolina. (SC recently passed an EB TUR trigger but has not yet formally triggered on. For purposes of this chart, they are considered to be triggered on to 20 EB weeks.)

Sources:

DOL ETA Emergency Unemployment Compensation Trigger Notice, Effective November 1, 2009

http://atlas.doleta.gov/unemploy/euc_trigger/2009/euc_110109.html

DOL ETA Extended Benefits Trigger Notice, Effective November 1, 2009

http://atlas.doleta.gov/unemploy/trigger/2009/trig_110109.html