Unemployment Conflict
Strong Feelings About The Need For UI

• "We have already been evicted from our home and are currently in the process of moving in with my parents; that is my husband and my 2 daughters, in a small 2 bedroom brick home....I am begging you on behalf of our family, before we lose absolutely everything, to please work out a compromise and pass the extension of these benefits to give us more time to try to help ourselves."
You got straps on them boots, doncha?

- "I'm sorry that you have been unable to find work....Since you live in Wayne County I would like to suggest that you look into job openings in our area. We have a new chicken processing plant in Kinston named Sanderson Farms and they currently have 191 openings available according to the web site link below."
Anger

• "The last thing I need, sir, is another politician acting as if the problem is that I am not applying for jobs....When I applied at Sanderson Farms, they were so inundated with applicants that the [North Carolina Employment Security Commission] (whom I was told to go through) literally wrote my name on a piece of paper with HUNDREDS of other names and disinterestedly told me they would 'call me if anything came open.'"
Skepticism

• "Most anyone can find a job if they can pass a drug test and are physically able to work....I have tried to find people to do yard work but it seems most are too good for manual labor. Based on the tone of your email it is not difficult to see why you can’t find a job."
Constituent Service

• "For your information sir, I can pass a drug test and am not opposed to manual labor....If your yard happens to be within 20 miles of Goldsboro, by all means I'll be over there with a rake and shovel first thing tomorrow morning."

• "If you really meant that you would be willing to work in my yard, then plan to come tomorrow morning....I'll pay $8 per hour. Let me know if you are serious."
Indignity

• "I was having her doing some bending over. She said it was bothering her back....She stayed for about an hour and left. ... I gave her eight dollars and thanked her."

• "It was just too much. I'm not used to doing manual labor, and the crap he wanted me to do was something two men would do....I’m used to making $22 an hour. I'm not gonna sit there for $8 and hour and come home having a stroke."
Vindication

• "If people need a job, they need to go looking for a job, and they need to take what they can get until they can find something better....I still think that a lot of those people are not actively looking for work."

• "I always found it amazing people that complain about the wages. It was above minimum wage. It was above what they'd get if they go to work at McDonald's. They think I'm some bad guy for offering $8 an hour.”
Humiliation

• "People just anonymously tell you that you suck and you're a lazy bum. I was physically unable to do what he was asking me....I was totally humiliated. It was not cool at all.”
Unemployment Confusion
Unclear Reporting

• Stephenie Dodson read in the newspaper earlier this month that some 28,000 Tennesseans will lose their federal unemployment benefits because of the state's improving economy. Notices would start hitting mailboxes within a week, the paper said.
Confusion Everywhere

• When Dodson received the second letter, she called the Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development to ask what was going on. After sitting on hold for 30 minutes or so, Dodson was connected with an agency employee who tried to set her straight.

• "She said, 'I don't understand this completely, but to my knowledge the state has run out of money and there's no money for that,'" Dodson told The Huffington Post. "I said, 'But wait, it's a federal thing.'"
My Attempt To Explain

• Contrary to the newspaper article Dodson read, the EB program is not expiring in Tennessee because of recent job gains. The state's unemployment rate has held steady at 9.5 percent for the past two months, after rising from 9.4 percent in January.

• The EB program is expiring only because the unemployment rate hasn't risen dramatically and -- even if it had not fallen at all -- the benefits could still have expired. A state's eligibility is based partly on whether the current unemployment rate is 10 percent higher than it was in either of the two previous years. Congress said states could remain in the EB program if state lawmakers moved their eligibility baselines back three years instead of just the past two. Compared with three years ago, unemployment rates in hard-hit states are much higher now.
I still got something wrong

- Correction: An earlier version of this story incorrectly reported that EB is fully funded by the federal government. In fact, states pay the cost of EB claims from people laid off by state, local and tribal governments, which typically amount to 2 percent of all claims, according to the National Employment Law Project.