



Laid Off & Left Out:

America's Workers Deserve Better

Dear Friends,

Last week, Congress took some very important steps towards moving the extension of jobless benefits sooner than later. So, now is a critical time, as Congress engages in this issue in a big way, to once more let your voices be heard again and bring about urgently needed extra support for families like yours.

The House of Representatives will vote as early as Tuesday on a bill that will help clear the way for immediate action on the extension. Please take a minute to email your member of Congress, urging them to support a strong extension of jobless benefits.

[Click here to take action](#)

Over 400,000 Americans are estimated to run out of all of their extended unemployment benefits by the end of this month, and by the end of December 2009 a total of more than 1.3 million will exhaust all assistance. (See updated [talking points](#)). Your actions have had a tremendous impact on the campaign to secure additional jobless benefits and [support in Congress](#) is growing.

Rep, Jim McDermott recently introduced streamlined legislation ([HR 3548](#)). The bill would provide 13 extra weeks of benefits to workers who run out of existing extensions this year and live in states with unemployment rates above 8.5%. The legislation would cover at least 25 states. The bill's focus on the crisis of workers exhausting all benefits now paves the way for quick action on the most immediate problem and defers until later the decision on other aspects of the existing unemployment benefit programs, slated to expire at the end of the year. Separating the issues in this manner will significantly advance the effort to get workers the assistance they need right now.

The first step to getting another extension is to move this House bill. It comes up for a vote as early as Tuesday, so it is important that you take action TODAY to contact your member of Congress in the House of Representatives. To move the bill rapidly under the Congressional rules that will apply to the vote on Tuesday, two-thirds of the House members will have to vote yes - meaning that we need Republican and Democratic support for the bill.

**** TAKE ACTION:** Click [here](#) to contact your Member of Congress to take immediate action on the issue of federal extended jobless benefits. Forward the action center link <http://www.nelp.org/page/speakout/ExtBenefitsNow> to everyone you know. Please also call your member of Congress to make sure they hear the message loud and clear by dialing the congressional switchboard at (202) 224-3121.

Passing HR 3548 is just a first step to getting a strong extension of benefits. NELP and others are working hard to forge a final bill that guarantees extra benefits to workers in EVERY state, not just those living in the highest unemployment states. That means it's critical for the Senate to come through with a strong bill that can pass right away.

Last Tuesday, the Finance Committee held a critical hearing moving the ball on extended UI benefits. In NELP'S testimony, we used the opportunity to call for more weeks of benefits for jobless workers in all states (10 to 20 weeks, depending on the state's unemployment rate), and a number of other critical reforms. Click [here](#) to read the testimony, and you can watch the video by clicking [here](#).

The chairman of the committee, Senator Max Baucus, ended the hearing by stating that he would introduce extension legislation "shortly," which is major progress coming from this critical branch of the Senate. We know decisive action can't come soon enough for so many of you who are waiting anxiously for Congress to act.

NELP will continue to call for more weeks of benefits for all states and push for continuation of all the unemployment and COBRA benefits in the Recovery Act. Moving the House bill (HR 3548) is the first step--then we will train our attention on the Senate to act on more weeks of benefits for all states and continued the Recovery Act benefits fully into next year.

As we receive more definitive information, we'll pass it along. What's for sure is that we have only gotten this far because of workers like you. Together we want to keep the pressure on Congress to act immediately and deliver extra weeks of benefits to workers in every state of the country.

Thanks again for everything you have already done.

Best,
Andy, Tiphany and Maurice for
The National Employment Law Project's Unemployed Workers team

P.S. Please also email Tiphany Lee at tlee@nelp.org with your ideas for on line communities of jobless workers in your area that might join the fight for extended jobless benefits. As always, check back regularly for our updates on the extended benefit situation [here](#). Please check back regularly and spread the word about unemployedworkers.org