

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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CONTACT: NAME
PHONE

REP. [NAME] PUSHES FOR AN EXTENSION IN UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS

Representative [NAME] today called on his/her colleagues in Congress to extend unemployment benefits for 4.6 million dislocated workers before the House of Representatives adjourns for the session in the coming weeks. Under current law, unemployment benefits would expire December 31, when Congress is in recess, so both the House and the Senate must act now.

Rep. [NAME] added his/her signature to a discharge petition this morning on the House floor. The discharge petition will allow immediate consideration of a bill offered by Reps. Charlie Rangel (D-NY) and Ben Cardin (D-MD) (H.R. 3244) to extend the federal benefits program for an additional six months, increase the amount of benefits to 26 weeks, include coverage for roughly one million workers who have already exhausted their extended benefits, and expand unemployment insurance coverage for low-wage and part-time workers.

“The need to extend unemployment insurance is great,” said Rep. [NAME]. “So far, President Bush is on track to have the worst job creation record since the Great Depression. Since he entered office, we’ve lost 3.2 million private sector jobs and increased the debt by \$3 trillion. Last year, the Republicans left town before extending unemployment benefits – leaving hundreds of thousands of jobless Americans to worry over the Christmas holiday. Congress cannot in good conscience adjourn for the year without making sure that millions of unemployed workers continue to receive help while they search for work.”

Rep. [NAME] also noted that while there are some positive economic indicators, huge job deficits continue. Hundred of thousands of newly unemployed workers are filing for unemployment benefits every week. Only one out of four will be able to find a job before their benefits expire and manufacturing jobs continue to drop.

Rep. [NAME] noted that not only will extending unemployment benefits help unemployed Americans, but it is also an effective way to bring back the economy and create jobs. Economists have estimated that each \$1.00 spent on unemployment benefits results in \$1.73 in economic growth.

If the discharge petition receives 218 signatures, the House of Representatives will consider the measure immediately. A discharge petition is the main mechanism to force a House vote on legislation that has been bottled up in committee.

Number of Workers Helped by Rangel-Cardin Unemployment Extension Bill (HR 3244)

	Number of Workers Who Are Projected to Exhaust Regular State UI Benefits, January-June 2004	Estimated Number of Workers Who Will Have Exhausted TEUC Benefits and Still Be Unemployed, End of October 2003	Projected Number of Workers Who Will Exhaust TEUC Benefits, November 2003 - March 2004	Total
Alabama	22,500	13,400	10,600	46,600
Alaska	12,100	2,200	1,700	16,000
Arizona	25,800	10,600	8,600	45,000
Arkansas	22,300	14,100	8,900	45,400
California	348,400	172,500	118,200	639,100
Colorado	31,400	21,500	13,700	66,500
Connecticut	27,200	18,600	13,200	59,100
Delaware	5,200	2,900	1,400	9,400
District of Columbia	3,800	4,900	1,500	10,200
Florida	70,200	62,200	40,300	172,700
Georgia	63,000	50,800	26,400	140,200
Hawaii	4,600	3,100	2,600	10,200
Idaho	12,300	5,200	3,400	20,900
Illinois	99,000	78,800	52,100	229,800
Indiana	55,500	30,600	19,900	106,100
Iowa	18,600	9,800	6,300	34,700
Kansas	20,100	10,700	7,800	38,600
Kentucky	21,900	22,000	12,400	56,400
Louisiana	21,800	13,100	10,500	45,400
Maine	6,900	4,100	2,300	13,300
Maryland	21,800	15,700	11,200	48,700
Massachusetts	65,400	36,700	32,000	134,100
Michigan	99,000	51,100	61,200	211,300
Minnesota	36,900	21,000	13,500	71,400
Mississippi	14,200	10,500	6,700	31,400
Missouri	39,700	22,100	14,700	76,600
Montana	6,900	1,900	1,100	9,900
Nebraska	11,500	5,200	3,800	20,500
Nevada	17,000	11,600	7,400	36,000
New Hampshire	3,800	2,300	1,500	7,700
New Jersey	107,200	83,100	53,500	243,800
New Mexico	8,900	2,800	2,100	13,800
New York	181,300	149,100	89,400	419,800
North Carolina	75,100	47,900	63,300	186,400
North Dakota	5,100	1,200	1,000	7,300
Ohio	64,400	44,000	29,400	137,800
Oklahoma	19,700	13,300	10,200	43,200
Oregon	40,000	25,000	24,000	89,000
Pennsylvania	101,900	68,700	54,100	224,700
Rhode Island	9,300	5,100	3,200	17,500
South Carolina	34,300	22,600	15,700	72,700
South Dakota	1,100	400	400	1,800
Tennessee	47,400	32,600	18,800	98,800
Texas	131,000	96,300	57,100	284,500
Utah	12,500	7,600	5,500	25,500
Vermont	3,000	1,400	1,000	5,500
Virginia	34,500	24,300	16,200	75,000
Washington	53,300	33,300	28,000	114,500
West Virginia	7,000	4,300	2,900	14,200
Wisconsin	47,200	32,500	13,100	92,700
Wyoming	2,300	2,600	900	5,800
Total	2,195,200	1,427,200	1,004,900	4,627,400

Preliminary estimates prepared by the Democratic Staff of the Committee on Ways and Means, based on information provided by the Joint Economic Committee Democratic Staff (10/08/03)

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE: CHARGE AND RESPONSE

CHARGE: Under the Democratic bill, someone who's been working for less than six months could get 12 months of benefits that encourages people not to work.

RESPONSE: Our bill provides benefits for the same number of weeks as President Bush did in the early 1990s. Since the beginning of the Bush Administration, long-term unemployment has tripled to the highest level in almost 10 years. The percentage of Americans exhausting their regular unemployment benefits without finding a job has reached a record level. It's a reasonable provision and appropriate given the jobs recession.

CHARGE: We've already provided nine months to a year's worth of benefits for workers. Why do these people need more help?

RESPONSE: Because we are in the worst jobs recession since the 1930s. Today, there are 3.1 workers available for every job, and long-term unemployment has tripled since the beginning of the Bush Administration. The unemployment rate is not expected to improve in the immediate future. That's why in the first Bush recession, benefits were extended three times.

CHARGE: The Democratic proposal is too expensive.

RESPONSE: The cost of our UI extension is covered by the UI Trust Fund, which was developed for just the kind of economic situation we are facing today. Besides, every dollar we spend on unemployment insurance boosts GDP by \$1.73. That's money well spent.

CHARGE: Extending unemployment benefits is bad for the economy – studies show that it encourages people to stay on unemployment longer.

RESPONSE: That's ridiculous. Unemployment benefits pay 50 percent of a worker's former wages at best, and more often it's less than that. That's not really an incentive to forgo full time work. The truth is, no one wants to be unemployed. Right now, there are 3.1 people for every available job. There simply aren't enough jobs for everyone who wants one.

CHARGE: Workers don't want a handout – they want a job. Making the tax cuts permanent will create jobs. Extending unemployment will not.

RESPONSE: Making the tax cuts permanent will benefit the wealthiest Americans 10 years from now, but it won't jump-start the economy or create jobs. The bottom line is that every dollar we spend on unemployment insurance boosts GDP by \$1.73. That's a real economic stimulus, and that's what creates jobs.