

STATEMENT IN SUPPORT OF THE UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION EXTENSION ACT OF 2010

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CONGRESSMAN DANNY K. DAVIS

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I strongly, resolutely, and steadfastly support this bill to extend critical unemployment benefits for our citizens through the end of November. This bill will provide vital assistance to over 137,600 Illinoisans, and over 2.5 million all across America, who lost their benefits between June 2nd and July 17th. This bill helps address a national emergency resulting from one of the worst economic recessions in our country's history.

Unemployment insurance is not a theoretical concept to these citizens. Unemployment is a very real lifeline. It allows mothers and fathers to buy food for their children. It allows people to help keep a roof over their families' heads. I have received so many tearful calls from my constituents who call to beg for my help. They are disheartened by their continued unemployment despite active and prolonged efforts to find a job. They are embarrassed that they cannot support their families, and they are frightened that their children will suffer from their inability to feed, clothe, or provide housing. When they learn that their government allowed these lifeline benefits to expire and failed to reinstate them for almost 8 weeks, they are shocked. They worked and paid taxes for years with an understanding that government would help them in a time of need. Yet, this assistance was not there.

I think it is unfortunate that Republicans have delayed this critical financial assistance for so long. To add insult to injury, while proclaiming that our government could not afford \$33 billion to help our citizens who are suffering during an economic emergency, the Republican leadership confidently asserted the position that we want the government to lose over \$650 billion for the wealthy. This is approximately 20 times the cost of this critical unemployment assistance. This is the same leadership that had no difficulty spending a trillion dollars on two wars and giving tax breaks to the wealthiest of the wealthy.

The extension of the aid for 99 weeks is an important first step in helping our citizens who are struggling to find employment. I promise to continue to work with the Democratic leadership to push for ways to help those remain unemployed beyond the 99 weeks. Long-term unemployment is an unfortunate reality for Chicago and for my constituents.

Passing this bill today tells our citizens that we are working for them. Further, passing this bill today reinforces their confidence in their government - confidence that they will help care for them in the lean times. For these reasons, I urge my colleagues to vote for its passage.