



DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

**News Release**

**LINDA LINGLE**  
GOVERNOR

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NELSON B. BEFITEL, DIRECTOR  
Phone: (808) 586-8844  
Fax: (808) 586-9099

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**UNEMPLOYED WORKERS TO RECEIVE  
EXTRA WEEKS OF UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS**

HONOLULU— Director of the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations Nelson Befitel announced that the federal unemployment benefits extension program has been extended for an additional five months to May 31, 2003. In addition, the new extension provides a transition period from June 1 to August 30, 2003 allowing unemployed workers to collect remaining balances on their existing Temporary Extended Unemployment Compensation (TECU) claims.

“We are pleased that President Bush and Congress acted swiftly to pass the extension in the new 2003 session. It will provide immediate relief to the jobless and bolster the economy,” said Befitel.

President Bush signed the bill for extension on January 8, 2003. The legislation became critical as the nation’s unemployment rate soared to 6% in November 2002. Without this extension, roughly 780,000 jobless across the nation would be prematurely cut off from receiving their TEUC benefits. An additional 95,000 jobless per week exhaust their regular, state-funded unemployment benefits and would not qualify for further benefits without this program.

(more)

Claimants who are eligible for the new extension period in Hawai'i will receive a notice from the Department to file or reopen their TEUC claims. This includes approximately 2,000 claimants who were cut off from claiming benefits when the original program ended on December 31, 2002. Claimants who have already exhausted their TEUC claim and collected 13 weeks of benefits are not eligible for additional weeks.

Claimants are encouraged to call the telephone filing service, Hawaii Tele-Claim:

To file a new TEUC claim from anywhere in Hawaii, call 643-5555, or from outside the State of Hawaii, call 1-877-215-5793 (toll-free).

To file continued claim certifications on an existing TEUC claim, call 643-3330, or from outside the State of Hawaii, call 1-888-805-6911 (toll-free).

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For more information, contact:  
Tom Jackson  
Administrative Assistant  
Phone: (808) 586-8865  
Email: [tjackson@dlir.state.hi.us](mailto:tjackson@dlir.state.hi.us)