

# Broad Support for Extending Unemployment Benefits

A diverse set of bipartisan and nonpartisan organizations and individuals have declared their support for an immediate extension of unemployment insurance benefits, including leaders of State and local governments, economists, faith groups, advocates for working families and labor unions.

## ***Organizations and Individuals Supporting the Unemployment Insurance Extension in HR 5749***

### **State Officials**

National Conference of State Legislatures\*  
National Governors Association\*  
Gov. Aníbal S. Acevedo Vilá (Puerto Rico)  
Gov. Jon S. Corzine (New Jersey)  
Gov. Christine O. Gregoire (Washington)\*  
Gov. David Patterson (New York)\*  
Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger (California)\*

### **Local Officials**

National Association of Counties (NACo)  
US Conference of Mayors

### **Economists**

Jared Bernstein, Economic Policy Institute  
Rebecca Blank, Brookings Institution<sup>#</sup>  
Harry Holzer, Georgetown University<sup>#</sup>  
John Irons, Economic Policy Institute  
Larry Mishel, Economic Policy Institute  
Heidi Shierholz, Economic Policy Institute

### **Working Families Advocates and Faith Groups**

Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN)  
Catholic Charities USA  
Center for American Progress Action Fund  
Center on Law and Social Policy (CLASP)  
Coalition on Human Needs (CHN)  
Interfaith Worker Justice  
Lutheran Services  
National Alliance to End Homelessness  
National Women's Law Center (NWLC)  
NETWORK  
United Church of Christ

### **Unions**

AFL-CIO - Building and Construction Trades Department  
AFSCME  
International Association of Bridge, Structural, Ornamental and Reinforcing Iron Workers (Iron Workers)  
International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers  
International Union of Bricklayers and Allied Craftworkers  
Teamsters  
United Auto Workers

\* Statement of support for UI extension does not specifically mention HR 5749

<sup>#</sup> Support communicated via email exchange which is not included here



NATIONAL CONFERENCE *of* STATE LEGISLATURES

*The Forum for America's Ideas*

**Donna D. Stone**  
*State Representative*  
*Delaware*  
*President, NCSL*

**Sharon A. Crouch Steidel**  
*Director, Information Systems*  
*Virginia House of Delegates*  
*Staff Chair, NCSL*

**William T. Pound**  
*Executive Director*

May 7, 2008

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker of the House  
United States House of Representatives  
H-232, U.S. Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable John Boehner  
Minority Leader  
United States House of Representatives  
H-204, U.S. Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20515

RE: Extension of Unemployment Compensation Benefits

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Representative Boehner:

We are writing to express the support of the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) for a temporary extension of unemployment compensation benefits, with adequate funds appropriated for state administrative functions.

Since its inception during the Great Depression, the unemployment compensation system has provided a temporary income support to workers who lose their jobs. The counter-cyclical partnership between states and the federal government was designed to accumulate and hold significant funds in trust accounts during good economic times and pay out benefits during bad economic times and simultaneously stimulate a stagnant economy.

State legislators are concerned that the percentage of unemployed workers is rising and that state unemployment insurance agencies have experienced reduced funding appropriated by Congress in recent years. Nationally, unemployment insurance claims levels and the exhaustion of benefits rate have been on the rise and states are struggling to respond with less federal administrative funding than previous years, especially those states with high unemployment rates.

In the 2008 legislative session, at least one state had to appropriate general funds to support the administration of the program. These funds should have been appropriated by Congress as part of the FY 2008 appropriations legislation and/or through Reed Act distributions to meet the needs of the program. Economic assumptions did not anticipate the increases in unemployment claims that the Congressional Budget Office now projects as a result of the current economic slowdown.

During the current Congress, several bills were introduced (e.g., S 1871, HR 2233, HR 3920, HR 5749) to extend benefits or modernize state unemployment systems. We support efforts by Congress to continue on the path to assist jobless individuals during this time of economic downturn. However, it is imperative that Congress continue to collaborate with states to strengthen

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7700 East First Place  
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Website [www.ncsl.org](http://www.ncsl.org)

May 7, 2008  
p. 2

their unemployment systems and enact unemployment insurance legislation that would provide adequate resources for administering the program and supplement, not supplant, current state efforts.

We appreciate your leadership and look forward to working with you on this issue. Should you or your staff have any questions about NCSL's position on this matter, please contact Diana Hinton Noel at 202-624-7779 or [diana.hinton@ncsl.org](mailto:diana.hinton@ncsl.org).

Sincerely,



Representative Phillip Frye, North Carolina  
Chair, NCSL Labor and Economic  
Development Committee



Representative Steve Conway, Washington  
Immediate Past Chair, NCSL Labor and  
Economic Development Committee

CC. Honorable Members of the United States Senate  
Honorable Members of the United States House of Representatives



Tim Pawlenty  
Governor of Minnesota  
Chair

Edward G. Rendell  
Governor of Pennsylvania  
Vice Chair

Raymond C. Scheppach  
Executive Director

May 1, 2008

The Honorable Max Baucus  
Chairman  
Committee on Finance  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Charles Grassley  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Finance  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Charles B. Rangel  
Chairman  
Committee on Ways and Means  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Jim McCrery  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Ways and Means  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Baucus, Senator Grassley, Chairman Rangel and Representative McCrery:

On behalf of the nation's governors, we write to express our support for an extension of unemployment benefits and to request federal assistance for states to serve a growing number of jobless individuals.

In the last month, 36 states experienced an increase in the unemployment rate. The national unemployment rate increased to 5.1 percent in March 2008. Most notable, however, is the significant number of individuals that are unemployed for 27 weeks or longer, thus exhausting all unemployment benefits. Today, approximately 16.7 percent of jobless individuals are experiencing long-term unemployment compared to approximately 11 percent at the beginning of the last recession.

Beginning in 1935, a federal-state partnership was formed to create an unemployment program that would provide a core stabilizing function during economic downturns through short-term income support for jobless individuals. In prior recessions including the economic downturn that began in 2001, Congress and the Administration utilized the program to extend unemployment benefits to jobless individuals.

At the same time, any proposal to extend unemployment benefits must also address the reality that states need additional resources to administer unemployment claims for a larger number of individuals for a longer period of time. This year alone, states may have to administer an average of nearly 400,000 unemployment insurance claims without federal funding. Federal support is needed by state employment and workforce agencies to administer increased initial unemployment claims, to support weekly unemployment benefits, and to provide employment and training services.

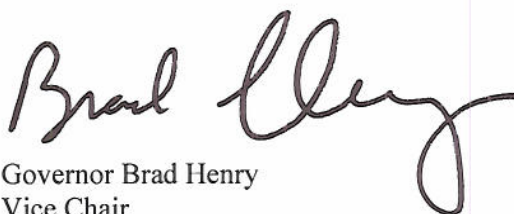
Given the current economic indicators and historical precedent, governors believe it is prudent and appropriate for Congress and the Administration to enact a temporary federally funded extension of unemployment insurance benefits and to provide a sufficient increase in funding for states to assist jobless individuals during this period of economic slowdown.

We stand ready to work with you and thank you for your leadership on this issue of national importance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Donald L. Carcieri". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Governor Donald L. Carcieri  
Chair  
Education, Early Childhood and Workforce  
Committee

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brad Henry". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, looping "y" at the end.

Governor Brad Henry  
Vice Chair  
Education, Early Childhood and Workforce  
Committee

ANÍBAL ACEVEDO VILÁ  
GOVERNOR  
COMMONWEALTH OF PUERTO RICO

April 16, 2008

Honorable Charles Rangel  
Chairman  
House Committee on Ways and Means  
1102 Longworth House Office Building  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515-6348

Dear Charlie:

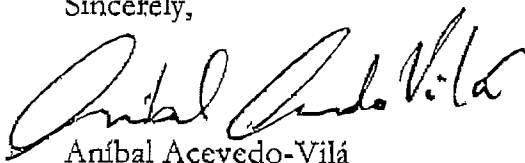
I would like to take this opportunity to commend you on your leadership in having the House Ways and Means Committee move forward and take action on the HR 5749, the Emergency Extended Unemployment Compensation Act of 2008.

Too often in the past Congress has waited too long to act on extended benefits programs and the result has been that benefits will not be available for working families who need them most. By moving forward in a preemptive manner, Congress will be making sure that benefits are available for these families. In Puerto Rico, the insurance unemployment rate was consistently under 3.5 percent for all of 2006 and 2007. However, in 2008, the insurance unemployment rate in Puerto Rico has consistently remained over 4 percent, reaching 4.96 percent in March 31st. More troubling is the fact that approximately 4,000 families exhaust their unemployment benefits each week.

Taking action now means that Congress will allow those 4,000 families to continue receiving unemployment benefits for an additional 13 weeks, so that they have more time to get back on their feet.

Again, I want to commend you on this effort so that working families can receive additional benefits through this economic downturn.

Sincerely,



Aníbal Acevedo-Vilá





## State of New Jersey

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

PO Box 001

TRENTON NJ 08625-0001

JON S. CORZINE  
*Governor*

Congressman Bill Pascrell  
2464 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515-3008

April 21, 2008

Dear Congressman Pascrell:

During this period of economic recession and hardship for New Jersey's working families, I write to urge you to support a temporary extension of unemployment insurance (UI) benefits to provide crucial economic support to New Jersey's unemployed workers and for additional support for the system that administers benefits for these workers during periods of involuntary unemployment.

First, I urge you to include an extension of unemployment insurance (UI) benefits in the FY 2008 Supplemental Appropriation bill. Congress appropriately responded to the last five recessions by passing legislation to extend unemployment insurance benefits and I ask that you continue this approach to economic hard times by supporting S.2544/H.R. 5749, the Emergency Extended Unemployment Compensation Act. This proposal, sponsored by Senator Kennedy/Congressman McDermott, would provide 13 weeks of federal extended benefits to enable the jobless to make ends meet while they continue their search for employment.

During the current economic downturn, New Jersey workers who become unemployed are out of work for longer periods and more of them experience long-term unemployment. The average duration of an unemployment insurance claim has been steadily increasing from the 2006 average of 17.8 weeks to 18.3 weeks in 2007. The number of claimants who have exhausted their benefits in 2008 has increased by 3.4% over this same period in 2007, and each week approximately 3,000 more unemployed workers are exhausting their benefits. In March 2008, 45.3% of New Jersey claimants exhausted their benefits before finding a new job. The extension of unemployment insurance benefits would provide a much needed stimulus to New Jersey's economy and financial assistance for its most vulnerable citizens.

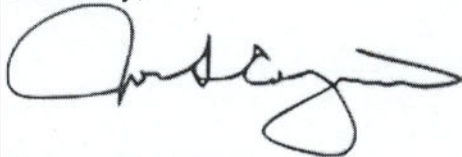
Additionally, I urge you to provide \$110 million in funding for state administration of the UI program. Every state UI program, including New Jersey's program, needs an immediate infusion of FY08 supplemental funds to handle the increased workload and correct the under funding of the unemployment insurance program this year. The FY 2008 appropriations legislation contained an expectation that severely underestimated the number of UI claims that would be paid this year, which resulted in inadequate resources for federally-funded administration of the UI system by the states. With rising unemployment, New Jersey and other states could be forced to administer nearly 400,000 additional unemployment insurance claims this year without any federal funding.

Based on our current workload, we are projecting an increase of 7% increase in initial claims and a 5% increase in continued claims in New Jersey this year. Just in the first quarter of the federal fiscal year, this under funding has already cost New Jersey almost \$1 million in "above-base" funding for additional claims workload. This inadequate funding hampers New Jersey's ability to prevent improper payments and reduces resources for collection of both overpaid UI benefits and delinquent employer contributions.

I hope you will agree that now is the right time to provide New Jersey and its residents with the resources necessary to respond to these trying economic times.

I stand ready to work with you to achieve these goals and thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jon S. Corzine", written in a cursive style.

JON S. CORZINE



CHRISTINE O. GREGOIRE  
Governor



STATE OF WASHINGTON  
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

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February 29, 2008

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi, Speaker  
United States House of Representatives  
235 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Harry Reid, Majority Leader  
United States Senate  
528 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Steny Hoyer, Majority Leader  
United States House of Representatives  
1705 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Senator Reid, and Representative Hoyer:

Thank you for taking the time to meet with several of my colleagues and me on Monday, February 25, 2008, while we were in Washington, D.C., attending the annual winter meeting of the National Governors Association (NGA). I think the time was well spent, and I appreciate your receptivity to the issues we brought forward, including: the need for a moratoria or repeal on the many Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS)-issued regulations, as well as the August 17 SCHIP guidance letter to states; the importance of a second stimulus package that focuses on job creation and investing in our nation's infrastructure; and pursuing the creation of a new mechanism for funding major infrastructure projects for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century that will keep America economically competitive in the global marketplace.

Medicaid Regulations/August 17 Guidance Letter

On February 26, NGA sent a letter to you and your Republican colleagues asking that Congress issue moratoriums for each of a number of CMS regulations set to take effect in the coming days and weeks. As you well know, these CMS regulations will cause significant harm to children, seniors and people with disabilities while shifting greater and greater costs to the states. States simply cannot shoulder the estimated \$15 billion over 5 years in costs. Governors – regardless of party – are unanimous in our wholesale opposition to the regulations. And on February 26, while testifying before the House Energy & Commerce Subcommittee on Health, five Governors, including: Haley Barbour of Mississippi, Deval Patrick of Massachusetts, Sonny Perdue of Georgia, Ted Strickland of Ohio, and myself, could not have been clearer in our summation of the adverse impact all of these regulations will have on all states.



The Honorable Nancy Pelosi, Speaker  
The Honorable Harry Reid, Majority Leader  
The Honorable Steny Hoyer, Majority Leader  
February 29, 2008  
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It is of vital importance to my state – and at least twenty-two others – that the CMS August 17 guidance letter to states also be overturned by Congress. As you know, the August 17 letter was sent by CMS to state health officials announcing new requirements that will hinder our efforts to cover uninsured children. The guidance, among other things, requires: (1) states to cover 95-percent of children below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) prior to moving eligibility levels above 250% FPL; and (2) a child previously covered through employer sponsored coverage to remain uninsured for one full year before being eligible for SCHIP.

By CMS measurement, it appears, no state will comply with the August 17 guidance. (In fact, according to CMS data, Vermont shows the highest participation rate of children below 200% FPL at 92 %, and Washington State at close to 91%.) Quite simply, the effect of the rule, intended or otherwise, is to preclude the states from covering children in low-income households.

#### Second Stimulus Package

I appreciate the swift efforts of Congress and the President to move the stimulus package you did earlier this month. I urge you to consider a second stimulus package with greater opportunity to stimulate the economy by creating good family wage jobs and investing in our economic future. Such could be the opportunity if Congress provides for grants to states and local governments for ready-to-move infrastructure projects around transportation, water and sewer projects and school construction projects. Every state has any number of projects that have gone through environmental reviews and are ready to go, but for funding.

As you know, NGA – again, on a bipartisan basis – presented you and your colleagues an economic stimulus proposal that includes \$6 billion in grants to states for infrastructure and \$6 billion in a five-quarter increase of the Federal Medical Assistance Percentage (FMAP). I ask that you consider this proposal, as well as the ideas discussed on Monday around extending unemployment insurance benefits and food stamp benefits – two items that are integral to any package intending to lift people up when the economy slows.

#### Transportation Infrastructure

With the impending bankruptcy of the Highway Trust Fund, I do not minimize the need to reauthorize the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act – a Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) in a sustainable way next year; and, frankly, with the leadership of members of my delegation, Washington State has fared well under the current framework. However, I believe that for a robust 21<sup>st</sup> Century economy, we need to look critically at how we currently fund transportation infrastructure, particularly so-called mega projects, in this country.

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi, Speaker  
The Honorable Harry Reid, Majority Leader  
The Honorable Steny Hoyer, Majority Leader  
February 29, 2008  
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An idea we have discussed is to use a Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC)-type model that could issue tax-exempt general purpose and project-based infrastructure bonds to raise capital for loans and direct subsidies to public sponsors. Outstanding obligations would have federal "full faith and credit" protection through this FDIC-like entity. This model could allow for loan guarantees as part of a tailored financing package offered to public sponsors of qualified infrastructure projects. This is just one idea and I welcome the opportunity to pursue others.

Thank you, again, for your time. As I said when we met, I continue to stand ready to assist you in doing whatever needs to be done to ensure a strong state-federal partnership in so many areas that are critical to the health, safety and well-being of all of the people we serve. Please call on me at any time; and, likewise, I will continue to call on you.

Sincerely,



Christine O. Gregoire  
Governor

cc: Senator Patty Murray  
Senator Maria Cantwell  
Congressman Brian Baird  
Congressman Norm Dicks  
Congressman Jay Inslee  
Congressman Rick Larsen  
Congressman Jim McDermott  
Congressman Adam Smith



STATE OF NEW YORK

DAVID A. PATERSON  
GOVERNOR

April 10, 2008

Honorable New York Member of Congress  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the state of New York and our work force, I am writing to respectfully request that you urge passage of an emergency extension of Unemployment Insurance (UI) benefits as rapidly as possible. Nationally, more than 35% of UI beneficiaries exhausted their benefits in 2007. This year, an estimated *three million workers* will go without any additional federal UI when their 26 weeks of jobless benefits expire. As the economy worsens nationally, an extension of these benefits will help workers and provide a boost for the economy. In New York State alone, 20 weeks of emergency benefits would infuse more than \$900 million directly into our state's economy in the first year.

As you are aware, an extension of UI benefits during a downturn is a particularly effective economic stimulus because the benefits are both well-targeted — to areas and industries most affected by economic slowdowns — and are temporary. It puts money into the hands of workers and families who need assistance the most and are most likely to spend it immediately on basic essentials. Further, the money invested in extended benefits flows immediately to local businesses, which in turn provides an additional economic boost.

As job losses rise, it is likely that the percentage of “long-term unemployed” workers who exhaust benefits (26 weeks, the maximum number of weeks regular UI benefits are available in most states) will continue to rise. In fact, the percentage of long-term unemployed nationally has remained stubbornly higher than it was at the start of the last recession (18.3% in January 2008, compared with 11.1% in March 2001).

Finally, I would also like to recommend funding for a Summer Jobs for Youth program, which could be used immediately this summer by cities and counties to hire thousands of youth in a variety of jobs to directly benefit neighborhoods. Historically, youth have among the highest unemployment rates, and we know that with youth these funds will certainly be “high velocity” dollars.



Thank you in advance for your serious and prompt consideration of these important worker needs. Please do not hesitate to contact me or my Commissioner of Labor, Patricia Smith, if you have questions or would like more information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David A. Paterson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent initial "D".

Governor David Paterson

cc: Patricia Smith



GOVERNOR ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER

April 21, 2008

The Honorable Harry Reid  
Majority Leader  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker of the House  
U. S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Minority Leader  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable John A. Boehner  
Minority Leader  
U. S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senator Reid, Senator McConnell, Madam Speaker, and Mr. Boehner,

I am asking for your leadership in enacting an emergency extension of unemployment insurance (UI) benefits for people who have lost their jobs in the economic downturn, as well as in securing additional funding for the administration of the UI program.

California has been hit especially hard by the national housing slump and subprime crisis. In the past year alone, we have lost 131,000 jobs in the construction and financial services sectors. California's unemployment rate now stands at 6.2 percent, and it is clear that states cannot fully address the consequences of the national housing downturn on their own. It is critical that Congress enact an extension of unemployment benefits as soon as possible to mitigate the impact of the downturn and fully fund administrative expenses.

For the 12-month period ending March 2008, more than 444,000 unemployed workers had exhausted their regular UI benefits in California. Our state's benefits exhaustion rate is 45 percent, compared to the national rate of 35 percent. Nationwide, the percentage of UI beneficiaries exhausting their benefits is already higher than at the beginning of the 2001 and 1990-91 recessions.

There is widespread agreement among economists that extending UI benefits is one of the most effective ways to stimulate a distressed economy. The money will go into the hands of unemployed workers, who will spend it immediately to meet pressing needs. If legislation extending UI benefits by 13 weeks were enacted today, those payments would infuse approximately \$1.7 billion into California's economy.

While unemployment claims have soared, funding for administration of the UI program is at historic lows and no longer adequately supports the cost of program operations, including collecting taxes, paying benefits and adjudicating claims. Workers, employers and states bear the burden of this federal funding shortfall through reduced access to services, higher taxes and delays in processing claims.

The Honorable Harry Reid  
The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
The Honorable John Boehner  
April 21, 2008  
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Federal funding for unemployment insurance administration has not been adjusted for inflation since 1995. For the last three years alone, the federal funding shortfall to states is approaching \$1 billion. For fiscal year 2008, the national UI administrative funding appropriation has been reduced by an estimated \$110 million. Roughly \$30 million would have come to serve unemployed workers in California.

I am committed to working with Congress to ensure that unemployed workers receive assistance in a timely manner and for a sufficient period as reflected by the national and local employment picture. Thank you in advance for your leadership, and please let us know how we can be of assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Arnold Schwarzenegger". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Arnold Schwarzenegger

cc: The Honorable Robert C. Byrd  
The Honorable Thad Cochran  
The Honorable David R. Obey  
The Honorable Jerry Lewis  
Members of the California Congressional Delegation



April 30, 2008

The Honorable Charles B. Rangel  
Chairman  
Ways and Means Committee  
1102 Longworth House Office Bldg.  
U. S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Rangel:

On behalf of the National Association of Counties (NACo), I write in support of the Emergency Extended Unemployment Compensation Act (H.R. 5749). The Department of Labor reported a loss of 80,000 jobs in March. This is the largest decline since 2003. Additionally, the price of food and fuel continues to increase. The expansion of benefits will provide much needed assistance to the estimated 3.5 million Americans who will exhaust their unemployment insurance this year.

Furthermore, NACo supports the bill's provision that guarantees at least an additional 13 weeks to every state. This provision recognizes that even those states that are below the national average of 5.1 percent have counties within the state with higher unemployment levels.

Counties are often the providers of last resort for health and human services and are already dealing with the negative effects of the economic crisis. Funding cuts to workforce development programs have further limited our ability to provide services to dislocated workers. Therefore, we encourage Congress to move quickly to approve H.R. 5749.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Larry E. Naake". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Larry E. Naake  
Executive Director





## THE UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF MAYORS

1620 EYE STREET, NORTHWEST

WASHINGTON, DC 20006

TELEPHONE 202-293-7330

FAX 202-293-2352

TDD 202-293-9445

URL: [www.usmayors.org/uscm](http://www.usmayors.org/uscm)

April 25, 2008

The Honorable Charles B. Rangel  
Chair  
Committee on Ways and Means  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2354 RHOB  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Rangel:

The United States Conference of Mayors is very concerned about hard working Americans who have not been able to find jobs in this declining economy and will be cut off from federal Temporary Extended Unemployment Compensation (TEUC). With the loss of 80,000 jobs in March, a housing crisis, credit crunch and other indicators pointing to a souring economy, the need for Congress to extend unemployment benefits to provide crucial relief to American workers is now.

As such, we urge you to provide an immediate, retroactive, full extension of benefits for *all* unemployed Americans and extend these benefits until the number of workers exhausting their regular benefits has declined substantially, as was done in past recessions. Families struggling to make it in these tough times cannot wait for decisive action.

Accordingly, the Conference of Mayors strongly supports the *Emergency Extended Unemployment Compensation Act* (H.R. 5749) -- bipartisan legislation recently passed by the House Committee on Ways and Means -- which provides an immediate extension of unemployment benefits nationwide.

The unemployment rate is currently at 5.1 percent, and long-term unemployment is higher than it has ever been at this point in the economic cycle. Almost 20 percent of all

unemployed have been out of work for six months or longer. At the beginning of the last two recessions, that number was closer to 12 percent. This suggests that a substantial number of those who lost jobs in 2007 are having serious difficulty finding new jobs. We should immediately dispatch assistance to the American people in the form of extended unemployment insurance benefits,

We look forward to your leadership on behalf of all unemployed workers and their families. Restoring unemployment benefits is the first step toward putting laid off Americans back on their feet. We also look forward to working with the Congress on an economic recovery package that will restore millions of Americans to productive work. If you have any questions, please contact Tom Cochran or Kathleen Amoroso of the Conference staff at 202-293-7330.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Douglas H. Palmer". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Douglas H. Palmer  
President  
Mayor of Trenton

cc: White House

April 28, 2008

Hon. Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Ms. Pelosi:

We are writing to urge you to bring to the floor H.R. 5749, the Emergency Extended Unemployment Compensation Act, which was approved by the Ways and Means Committee on April 16. H.R. 5749 would protect millions of hard working Americans from the loss of unemployment insurance benefits as the economy continues to weaken, and it would provide badly needed stimulus, helping to offset the loss of consumer purchasing power from the enormous loss of home equity, increasing unemployment, the falling dollar, and decreasing work hours.

Considering the state of the economy and the fact that long-term unemployment is already at very high levels, the need for H.R. 5749 is urgent. While some claim that the unemployment rate is low and extending benefits is premature, they misjudge the labor market, which is far weaker than the unemployment rate would indicate. Payroll employment fell by 232,000 jobs in the first three months of the year, and private payrolls have fallen four months in a row. If, as Goldman Sachs predicts, unemployment will rise to 6% by the end of the year, more than 9 million workers will be officially unemployed and still seeking work. Millions more will be underemployed or will have dropped out of the labor market altogether.

Several Members of Congress have argued that extended benefits should be limited to states with very high unemployment, but what appears at first to be a targeted approach is actually completely misguided. As economist Rebecca Blank has shown, long-term unemployment is not disproportionately concentrated in high-unemployment states. Indeed, if Congress provided extended unemployment benefits only to these high-unemployment states, 85% of the nation's long-term unemployed would not benefit. About half of the long-term unemployed are in the 25% of states with the lowest overall unemployment rate.

We urge you to move H.R. 5729 to the floor as quickly as possible.

Sincerely,

Lawrence Mishel, President  
Economy Policy Institute

Ross Eisenbrey, Vice President

John Irons, Director of Research

Jared Bernstein, Director, Living Standards Program

Heidi Shierholz, Economist





# ACORN

Honorable Charles Rangel, Chairman  
Committee on Ways and Means  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1102 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

May 3, 2008

Honorable Jim McDermott  
Subcommittee on Income Security and Family Support  
U.S. House of Representatives  
B-317 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Rangel and Chairman McDermott,

The Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN) encourages the House of Representatives to pass the Emergency Extended Unemployment Compensation Act of 2008 (H.R. 5749).

Low-income Americans across the country are dealing with losing their jobs on top of foreclosed houses, the rising cost of food, gas, and medicine, and an unpredictable economy. Over 3 million workers in the next year will be running out of their state UI benefits. Congress must act swiftly to extend unemployment benefits in order to funnel assistance quickly to those who need it.

Economists and advocates alike support the measures found in H.R. 5749. Extending unemployment insurance benefits not only assists workers struggling through the current recession but it also provides a stimulative effect on the economy.

ACORN thanks you for your continued support of low-income Americans and workers across this county.

Sincerely,

Maude Hurd  
ACORN National President

Cc: Speaker Nancy Pelosi

**Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now**

National Office: 739 8th Street S.E., Washington, D.C. 20003 • 202-547-2500 FAX 202-546-2483



Providing Help. Creating Hope.

April 21, 2008

The Honorable Jim McDermott  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Income Security and  
Family Support  
United States House of Representatives  
1035 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Philip English  
Member  
Subcommittee on Income Security and  
Family Support  
United States House of Representatives  
2332 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

**Episcopal Liaison**  
The Most Reverend  
Michael P. Driscoll,  
MSW, DD  
Bishop of Boise

**Chair**  
Janet Valente Pape

**Vice Chair**  
Ronald P. Laurent

**Secretary**  
Sister Shalini  
D'Souza, SCN

**Treasurer**  
John L. Young

**President**  
Rev. Larry J. Snyder

Dear Chairman McDermott and Representative English:

I am writing to express our support for your legislation to extend unemployment benefits to workers hard hit by the current economic downturn. "The Emergency Extended Unemployment Compensation Act", H.R. 5749, would provide up to 13 weeks of unemployment benefits to dislocated workers in every state. It would also provide an additional 13 weeks for states with unemployment rates above six percent. This bipartisan bill represents the type of leadership that Catholic Charities USA believes is necessary to revitalize our economy and help more struggling families. With the national unemployment rate averaging over five percent, it is essential that Congress and the Administration take immediate action to help families who are out of work and struggling to making ends meet.

Catholic Charities USA is one of the nation's largest private networks of over 1,700 social service agencies and institutions providing essential services to nearly eight million people annually. Many of our agencies provide a myriad of vital services in their communities, ranging from day care and counseling to food and housing. In recent months, we have seen an increase in demand for services as the economy worsened and more workers became unemployed. As an important component of our *Campaign to Reduce Poverty in America*, Catholic Charities USA strongly supports efforts to strengthen the nation's unemployment compensation system. We were disappointed that unemployment extension was not included in the first economic stimulus package and hope this legislation will become law this year.

Thank you for your leadership to our nation's most vulnerable families. We look forward to working with you in the coming weeks as Congress takes up this important issue.

Sincerely,

Candy Hill  
Senior Vice President for Social Policy and Government Affairs



April 23, 2008

The Honorable Charles Rangel  
Chairman, Committee on Ways and Means  
2354 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Rangel:

On behalf of the Center for American Progress Action Fund, I am writing to express our support for the Emergency Extended Unemployment Compensation Act of 2008 (H.R. 5749). This legislation will assist the 3.2 million jobless workers that the Congressional Budget Office estimates will exhaust regular unemployment benefits in 2008-2009. It will also provide a necessary boost to the nation's economy by preventing those who have lost their jobs from curbing their spending and contributions to the marketplace. Further, this proposal is a well-established policy solution. During the last five recessions Congress voted to extend unemployment benefits for workers who have exhausted their regular benefits.

H.R. 5749 will fund all states to provide up to 13 weeks of Emergency Extended Unemployment Compensation (EEUC) to those who have exhausted their regular unemployment benefits. In those states with higher levels of unemployment, beneficiaries could receive an additional 13 weeks of compensation (or a total of 26 weeks of EEUC).

This stimulus measure will assist the nation's jobless workers who are feeling the effects of the recent economic downturn. Between February and March of this year, the unemployment rate jumped from 4.8 percent to 5.1 percent. Although 5.1 percent is not a historically high level, it is higher than average for the beginning of a recession. March's increase was also a part of a year-long trend defined by a 16% increase in unemployment since March of 2007, leaving 7.8 million people without work during March of 2008. The last time the annual growth rate of the unemployment level was that high was during the last recession in August 2002.

The increases in unemployment are just one part of the larger economic picture. According to the Economic Policy Institute, long-term unemployment (6 or more months) is unusually high given the current unemployment rate. Historically, when the unemployment rate is in the range of 5%, the share of unemployed that are long-term unemployed has been about 10%. However, the current share of unemployed that are long-term unemployed is nearly twice as high—18.5%.

Moreover, the number of jobs is falling. March non-farm employment levels decreased by 80,000 jobs, the third month of decline in a row, bringing the total number of jobs the economy has lost in 2008 to 232,000. Further, in the last twelve months, only 536,000 jobs were added to the economy, which is far fewer than the number needed to keep up with population growth.

Fewer jobs coupled with rising unemployment means that many people who are already out of work may stay unemployed longer. Thus, it is critical that Congress pass H.R. 5749 to assist vulnerable individuals and families in this time of economic crisis.

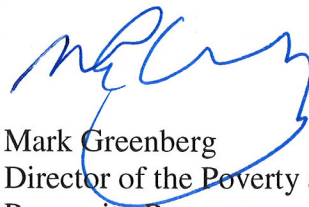
H.R. 5749 will also stimulate the economy. A major study commissioned by the U.S. Department of Labor analyzed past recessions and found that each dollar of unemployment insurance benefits boosts the nation's GDP by \$2.15, and that at their peak, unemployment insurance benefits annually saved an average of 130,000 jobs. Jobless workers receiving EEUC will likely spend their money right away in order to cover their basic living expenses, therefore, they will be immediately feeding those funds back into their communities and the national economy more generally.

Congress should act now to provide relief to those struggling to find work during a time of increased unemployment and a declining number of jobs. It should also seek to do what it can to prevent unnecessary downward trends in the economy. The Emergency Extended Unemployment Act of 2008 accomplishes both of those goals. Therefore, we support its passage.

Sincerely,



Winnie Stachelberg  
Senior Vice President for  
External Affairs



Mark Greenberg  
Director of the Poverty and  
Prosperity Program



# CLASP

CENTER FOR LAW AND SOCIAL POLICY

April 18, 2008

Honorable Charles B. Rangel, Chairman  
Committee on Ways and Means  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1102 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515


Dear Chairman Rangel,

The Center for Law and Social Policy commends the passage of the Emergency Extended Unemployment Compensation Act (HR 5749) by the Ways and Means Committee. Long-term unemployment is much higher today than it was at the beginning of previous recessions. An extension of unemployment insurance benefits will provide vital support to more than 3 million workers who will exhaust their benefits in the next year, according to a National Employment Law Project analysis.

While this bill is an important step, more needs to be done to help vulnerable workers and families who are hardest hit by the economic downturn. In addition to passage of HR 5749, we urge you to adopt a comprehensive relief package that assists low-income individuals and families, as well as targeted state fiscal relief to keep critical services available.

We thank you for your attention to the needs of long-term unemployed workers. Please let us know if we can be of any assistance as you develop a comprehensive package that stimulates the economy and provides needed help to low-income workers and their families.

Sincerely,



Alan W. Houseman, Executive Director  
Center for Law and Social Policy



# COALITION ON HUMAN NEEDS

1120 Connecticut Avenue, NW \*Suite 910 \* Washington, DC 20036 \* 202.223.2532 \* [www.chn.org](http://www.chn.org)

April 18, 2008

The Honorable Charles Rangel  
Chair, House Committee on Ways and Means  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Rangel:

I am writing on behalf of the Coalition on Human Needs in support of H.R. 5749, the Emergency Extended Unemployment Compensation Act of 2008. The Coalition on Human Needs is an independent national alliance of over 110 religious, service provider, labor, civil rights, policy, advocacy, and other organizations working to meet the needs of low-income and vulnerable people. We are pleased that this legislation has been approved by the House Committee on Ways and Means, and hope that it becomes law very soon.

H.R. 5749 is a modest response to an increasingly urgent need. It provides 13 weeks of extended unemployment insurance to people who have exhausted their state benefits, plus an additional 13 weeks in states with unemployment rates of at least 6 percent. In some previous recessions, more weeks of extended benefits have been provided. Your own H.R. 4934 would provide 26 weeks of benefits for all states. We believe a greater number of weeks would be warranted, but strongly believe that the urgency of the current employment picture makes it important to move as quickly as possible to extend benefits. H.R. 5749 has bipartisan support, which should allow it to move forward more easily.

According to the Congressional Budget Office, 3.5 million jobless people will exhaust their unemployment benefits by the end of this year. They have remained unemployed because there simply are not enough jobs to go around. In the past quarter alone, 296,000 private sector jobs have been lost.

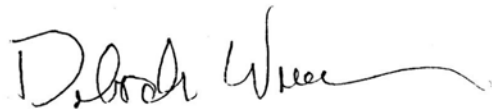
The Coalition on Human Needs has joined with the Emergency Campaign for America's Priorities (ECAP) and many other organizations in support of a Shared Recovery package – a set of initiatives focused on services, benefits, and funding to states that economists say will provide the most effective economic stimulus, as well as addressing growing hardships caused by the recession. Prominent among these initiatives is support for extended unemployment insurance benefits. Moody's Economy.Com's chief economist Mark Zandi has cited extending unemployment insurance as one of "...the most effective ways to prime the economy's pump..."

Extending unemployment insurance is one of the most effectively targeted forms of stimulus the federal government can offer. If the economy improves and people are able to find work, they will not need or use these extended benefits. But we know there are already close to twice as many workers unemployed for more than six months now than in March 2001, the start of the last recession. If they do not receive extended benefits, they will pull the economy down further by being unable to purchase the necessities, perhaps including their home mortgage payments. If instead government responds to their needs, their additional spending will provide a boost to the economy; one study found that UI benefits preserved an annualized average of 130,000 jobs.

We want to respond to the claim that providing extended benefits will prolong periods of unemployment. One study found that a 13-week extension was associated with a two-week increase in the time unemployed; other research questions the cause-and-effect link. We agree with the expert analysts who show that time spent receiving unemployment benefits results in workers finding better jobs more suited to their level of skills. When times are hard, it will take longer to find those good jobs, but that time pays off in greater stability and higher living standards.

Thank you for your leadership in reporting out The Emergency Extended Unemployment Act of 2008. We hope it will be part of a speedy response by Congress to reverse the recession, joined by efforts to add funding for nutrition programs, home energy assistance, aid to states, child support enforcement, Head Start, school repair, and summer youth programs.

Most sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Deborah Weinstein", with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Deborah Weinstein  
Executive Director

# Interfaith Worker Justice



1020 West Bryn Mawr, 4th Fl. • Chicago, IL 60660-4627  
Phone: (773) 728-8400 • Fax: (773) 728-8409  
[www.interfaithworkerjustice.org](http://www.interfaithworkerjustice.org)

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May 13, 2008

The Honorable Charles Rangel  
Chairman, House Ways and Means Committee  
1102 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Rangel,

On behalf of Interfaith Worker Justice, a national organization of people of faith working to defend the rights of workers, especially low-wage workers, I am writing to express support for legislation to provide for an emergency extension of unemployment benefits to the many workers hurt by the current economic downturn.

The Emergency Extended Unemployment Compensation Act of 2008 (H.R. 5749) would provide the basic support of unemployment insurance, a moral necessity that will help alleviate poverty and hardship for workers who lose or have lost jobs in this declining economy. There are currently nearly 1.3 millions workers who have been unemployed for more than six months. The legislation would make available up to 13 weeks of extended unemployment compensation, up to 26 weeks in states with higher unemployment. The bill thus has great potential to fight poverty in families struggling to find work.

As people of faith, we must support members of our community during hard times. In the current climate, extended unemployment insurance is a means to maintain a decent standard of living while putting money into the hands of those who not only need it most, but who will put it right back into our economy. The benefits of this program thus go far beyond the individuals and families receiving the direct support.

It is a moral imperative that this program extension be enacted, as it will provide millions of American workers with the safety and security they need and deserve.

Thank you very much for your leadership on this important matter.

Sincerely,

/s/

Ted Smukler  
Director of Public Policy  
Interfaith Worker Justice



Lutheran Services in America

*Together we can*

122 C Street NW #125

Washington, D.C. 20001

t] 202.626.7945

f] 202.783.7502

w] [www.lutheranservices.org](http://www.lutheranservices.org)

May 7, 2008

The Honorable Charles B. Rangel  
Chairman  
Ways and Means Committee  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1102 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Jim McDermott  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Income Security and Family Support  
U.S. House of Representatives  
B-317 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairmen Rangel and McDermott,

I am writing to express our support for H.R. 5749, the Emergency Extended Unemployment Compensation Act. This important legislation would provide up to 13 weeks of unemployment benefits to dislocated workers in every state. We are pleased that the bill would also provide an additional 13 weeks for states with high unemployment rates.

Lutheran Services in America members reach out to love and serve our neighbors in the name of Christ. During this economic downturn we know that the number of those without a job is increasing and 3.5 million jobless workers will exhaust their regular unemployment benefits in 2008. We are pleased that the extension in benefits will be paid out of the federal unemployment trust funds which has over \$35 billion in reserves. The extension is affordable with a CBO preliminary estimate that the bill will cost \$12.9 billion to extend unemployment benefits. We look forward to this legislation moving quickly through the legislative process to help those in need.

LSA is an alliance of national Lutheran church denominations and their health and human service providers. LSA member organizations deliver more than \$9.5 billion in services to more than six million people every year – that translates to one in 50 people in the United States. LSA members provide services in all 50 states and the Caribbean. The network of close to 300 organizations serves the elderly, children and families, people with mental and physical disabilities, refugees, victims of natural disasters and others in need. Through these efforts LSA is on the front lines of building self-sufficiency and creating hope in millions of lives.

Sincerely,

*Lisa M. Carr*

Lisa M. Carr

Senior Director of Public Policy

Cc: Speaker Pelosi

May 2, 2008

The Honorable Charles Rangel  
Chairman, Committee on Ways and Means  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2354 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

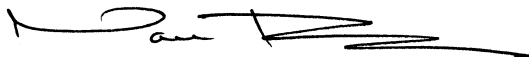
Dear Chairman Rangel:

The National Alliance to End Homelessness (the Alliance) is pleased to offer this letter of support for H.R. 5749, the Emergency Extended Compensation Act of 2008. The Alliance is a nonpartisan, mission-driven organization committed to ending and preventing homelessness in the United States. The Alliance believes that H.R. 5749, through extending unemployment benefits, would help prevent homelessness for many families and individuals whose unstable income leaves them precariously housed and at risk of homelessness.

Fundamentally, homelessness is driven by families' inability to pay for housing. Too many low and moderate income American households are already paying too much for housing. Today, over 9 million renter households are severely housing cost burdened, meaning that over 50 percent of their income goes to pay for housing. And, of course, the recent subprime crisis has forced more than 1 million households to enter into foreclosure proceedings in the last year. When such families lose their source of income through unemployment, they are at high risk of homelessness. Unemployment benefits are essential to prevent this outcome. According to one state survey, over 40 percent of expenditures paid for with unemployment benefits were directed to housing costs. H.R. 5749 is clearly needed to assist these households in meeting the high cost of housing and prevent them from becoming homeless.

We at the Alliance are grateful for your leadership on this issue and for your unwavering commitment to low-income Americans. We look forward to working with you in the future as we work to strengthen the supports of those at risk of homelessness.

Sincerely,



Nan Roman  
President

April 23, 2008

Chairman Charles Rangel  
Committee on Ways and Means  
United States House of Representatives  
1102 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Rangel:

The National Women's Law Center writes to express its support for H.R. 5749, The Emergency Extended Unemployment Compensation Act. The additional weeks of unemployment benefits provided for by H.R. 5749 would provide vital temporary income support for jobless workers and their families and highly effective stimulus for the worsening economy.

Unemployment benefits prevent workers and their families from falling into poverty. But in the current weak labor market, millions of Americans are at risk of having no job and no unemployment compensation. The number and percentage of workers that have exhausted their unemployment benefits is already far higher than at the beginning of past recessions. About 1.3 million workers have exhausted their state unemployment benefits, and the Congressional Budget Office estimates that by the end of the year, benefits will run out for about 3.5 million Americans before they can find work – if Congress fails to act.

While quick action to extend unemployment benefits as provided for by H.R. 5749 is urgently needed, this will not be sufficient to protect women and their families during these hard times. Many workers, especially women, are currently ineligible for unemployment benefits because of inequities in the program's design. The Center also urges you to act quickly on the package of reforms included in the Unemployment Insurance Modernization Act to make this critical safety net available to more women and low-wage workers, and other measures to counter the recession by boosting the incomes of economically vulnerable people and preventing the loss of jobs and services in states.

Sincerely,



Nancy Duff Campbell  
Co-President



Joan Entmacher  
Vice President, Family Economic Security

Cc: Speaker Nancy Pelosi, Representative Jim McDermott, Representative Phil English,



April 28, 2008

The Honorable Charles Rangel  
Chair, House Ways and Means Committee  
1102 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC

Dear Representative Rangel,

It is with gratitude I write concerning the passage of HR 5749 by the Ways and Means Committee. This is one of the critical means of stimulating the economy, and of providing a bit of justice to the many long-term unemployed. It is now urgent for members of your committee to urge all members of the House to vote in favor of the bill.

As you know, there are many unemployed and under-employed persons who have become invisible in the unemployment numbers, and who receive no unemployment benefits. With the recent downturn in the economy the number of unemployed is steadily increasing – as has been obvious in the last three months Department of Labor employment reports. I look forward with anxiety to the report due out this Friday.

This bill **MUST** be passed by the entire House, and then by the Senate. Lives are hanging in the balance. There is an economic need on the part of families which is shared by society – those without income are unable to stimulate the economy. And, there is a human need. Catholic Social Teaching reminds us: The dignity of work flows from the dignity of the human person and the rights of the person to participate in using his or her gifts and skills to provide for one's livelihood and that of one's family.

NETWORK will continue to work with House and Senate office to ensure the passage of this bill.

Sincerely,

Marge Clark, BVM  
For NETWORK, a National Catholic Social Justice Lobby

*Fax*

**UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**  
*Justice and Witness Ministries*  
**Public Life and Social Policy Ministry**  
 100 Maryland Avenue, NE Suite 330  
 Washington, DC 20002



Phone (202)543-1517

Facsimile (202)543-5994

DATE: 4/23/08

Number of Pages (including cover) 2

TO: Indivar Dutta-Gupta

FAX: 202-225-9490

PHONE: 202-225-6281

FROM:

- Sandy Sorensen
- Mari Castellanos
- Sara Critchfield
- Pat Conover

- Raymond Thomas
- SuAnne Breen

Jessie Palatucci

REGARDING: unemployment Insurance

MESSAGE:

April 22, 2008

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

The Honorable Charles Rangel  
Chairman, House Ways and Means Committee  
1102 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Rangel:

As people of faith we affirm that our economic institutions and relationships, like the whole of human life of which they are a part, are important in the sight of God and from the perspective of our faith. I am writing to you on behalf of the United Church of Christ, Justice and Witness Ministries to express our vigorous support for the Emergency Extended Unemployment Compensation Act of 2008 (H.R.5749).

The present poor economy continues to bring hardship to American workers. Currently, nearly 1.3 million workers have been unemployed for more than six months. In the first three months of this year alone, the U.S. economy lost a total of 232,000 jobs. The declining economy and rising costs of food and fuel are already putting enormous pressure on low and middle-income Americans. With the labor markets steeply declining more workers are facing the possibility of layoffs. These people need and deserve our support.

We believe that all people have both the responsibility and the right to earn their living under conditions which are just to them as individuals and our community as a whole. It is essential that when employment is not available, unemployment compensation should be sufficient to enable the worker and their family to maintain a decent standard of living.

Unless Congress takes action to extend unemployment benefits, millions of families will find themselves in severe economic hardship, unable to pay for basic necessities for their families. Further, extending unemployment insurance will put money into the hands of those people who will put the money right back into our economy.

As Christians, our biblical mandate is clear. In these economically challenging times we are called to care for the common good and to respond to the hardships suffered by unemployed workers. We must restore the social safety net that is so critical for millions of Americans struggling to sustain themselves and their families in this declining economy. We urge you to support the Emergency Extended Unemployment Compensation Act of 2008 (H.R.5749).

Sincerely,

Sandra L. Sorensen  
Director of the Washington Office  
United Church of Christ  
Justice and Witness Ministries

Cc: *The Honorable Nancy Pelosi*



COLLEGIUM OF OFFICERS

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General Director and President
- Edith A. Gaffey  
Associate General Minister
- M. Linda Jaramillo  
Justice and Witness Ministries
- Jose A. Malayang  
Justice and Witness Ministries
- Gail Rogers-Witte  
Justice and Witness Ministries

God is still speaking,

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## **Building and Construction Trades Department**

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR—CONGRESS OF INDUSTRIAL ORGANIZATIONS  
815 SIXTEENTH ST., N.W., SUITE 600 • WASHINGTON, D.C. 20006-4104

(202) 347-1461

[www.BCTD.org](http://www.BCTD.org)

FAX (202) 628-0724

April 22, 2008

The Honorable Charles Rangel, Chairman  
Ways and Means Committee  
United States House of Representatives  
1102 Longworth Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Rangel:

More than 200,000 jobless workers a month run out of unemployment insurance (UI) benefits without finding new jobs. Some 3.5 million unemployed workers are expected to exhaust their benefits this year.

To put it another way, that's six months without work or prospects for a new job in an economy that is losing jobs at an accelerated pace, and is on a downward spiral that most economists say isn't even close to bottoming out.

To that end, the Building & Construction Trades Department applauds the actions taken by the U.S. House Ways and Means Committee to help the long-term jobless when it approved legislation (H.R. 5749) to provide an additional 13 weeks of UI benefits for jobless workers in every state and an additional 13 weeks to those in states with high unemployment rates.

There are currently 1.3 million workers—or 17.5 percent of all unemployed workers—who have been jobless for more than six months....The long-term unemployment rate is already much higher than it was at the beginning of the 2001 and 1990-1991 recessions, and is the same as when Congress extended benefits during the last two recessions.

Sadly, there is now only one job available for every two (1.93) people actively seeking work. Payrolls contracted for the third month in a row in March—the largest job loss in five years—and the number of private-sector jobs has fallen 300,000 since November.

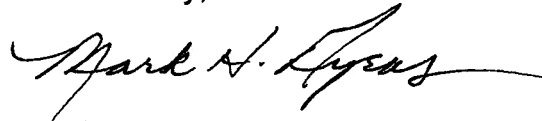
And the official numbers may not reflect the real number of unemployed. The current jobless rate does not include the jobless who are not receiving unemployment benefits or those who have exhausted their benefits. Some government experts put the unemployment rate at 9 percent, if those jobless workers are included.

The Honorable Charles Rangel, Chairman  
April 22, 2008  
Page 2

Extending UI benefits not only provides help to jobless workers, it gives the economy a needed boost. There is a general consensus among economists that providing unemployment benefits is one of the most efficient ways to stimulate the economy, since jobless workers are most likely to spend their benefits immediately and pump more money back into more economy, generating more economic activity. A 1999 Labor Department study estimates that every dollar of unemployment compensation boosts U.S. Gross Domestic Product (GDP) by \$2.15.

The Building & Construction Trades Department offers its full support for H.R. 5749 and encourages its adoption by the full House of Representatives.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark H. Ayers", with a long, sweeping horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Mark H. Ayers  
President

MHA/wcy



Gerald W. McEntee  
President

William Lucy  
Secretary-Treasurer

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Westerville, OH

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Jeanette D. Wynn  
Tallahassee, FL

April 24, 2008

The Honorable Charles Rangel  
Chairman  
Committee on Ways and Means  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

I am writing on behalf of the 1.4 million members of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) to express our strong support for the Emergency Extended Unemployment Compensation Act of 2008 (H.R. 5749). We urge quick action on this important legislation.

H.R. 5749 would provide 13 weeks of extended unemployment benefits for jobless workers in every state, plus another 13 weeks of benefits for states that have at least 6% unemployment.

Opponents of the legislation cite a low overall unemployment rate to justify delay or more limited measures. However, the number of workers unemployed for more than 26 weeks, who would qualify for these benefits, already is much higher than at the beginning of the 2001 and 1990-91 recessions. Currently, there are 1.3 million long-term unemployed, with 3.5 million workers projected to exhaust their state benefits over the next year.

Economic conditions are comparable to or worse than those that existed when the last such bill was introduced in 2001. The March unemployment rate this year was 5.1%, higher than the average for the beginning of a recession. In addition, the long-term unemployment rate is already much higher than it was at the beginning of the 2001 and 1990-91 recessions, and the portion of workers who are exhausting state benefits without finding work (36%) is the same as in February 2002.

In addition to providing much needed assistance to jobless workers, H.R. 5749 would provide a much needed stimulus to the economy. Mark Zandi of Economy.com estimates that every dollar of extended unemployment benefits generates \$1.64 of economic growth. Consequently, extending unemployment benefits would boost the economy by more than \$1.7 billion per month.

Funds for H.R. 5749 would come from the federal unemployment trust fund, which is specifically dedicated to this purpose. That trust fund now has over \$35 billion in reserves, more than enough to cover the \$12.7 billion in extended benefits that the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) estimates H.R. 5749 would provide.

**American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, AFL-CIO**

TEL (202) 429-1000 FAX (202) 429-1293 TDD (202) 659-0446 WEB [www.afscme.org](http://www.afscme.org) 1625 L Street, NW, Washington, DC 20036-5687

Day after day the economic news gets worse. And day after day, more workers see their economic security crumble. There is no good reason to delay any longer. We strongly urge Congress to take immediate action on this important legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Charles M. Loveless". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "C" and "L".

Charles M. Loveless  
Director of Legislation

CML:nm:gm



*International Association of*  
**BRIDGE, STRUCTURAL, ORNAMENTAL AND REINFORCING IRON WORKERS**

JOSEPH J. HUNT  
GENERAL PRESIDENT  
202 383-4810

*Affiliated with AFL-CIO*



SUITE 400  
1750 NEW YORK AVE., N.W.  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20006



April 22, 2008

The Honorable Charles Rangel, Chairman  
Ways and Means Committee  
United States House of Representatives  
1102 Longworth Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Rangel:

The Iron Workers and our employers have a huge base in the industrial states of Ohio and Michigan. Therefore, we applaud the Ways and Means Committee for helping the long-term unemployed when it last week approved H.R. 5749. This provides workers with an additional 13 weeks of Unemployment Insurance benefits plus an additional 13 weeks to those states with high unemployment rates – such as Michigan and Ohio.

With the economy in a recession along with growing unemployment, we also know that extending UI benefits helps not only our Iron Worker membership and workers in all industries, but it helps give the slumping US economy a shot in the arm. As economists have shown, workers are more likely to spend their benefits and thereby pump money back into the economy.

I join in offering our full support for H.R. 5749 and urge its passage by the full House of Representatives.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joseph J. Hunt". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

GENERAL PRESIDENT

JJH:jh



**INTERNATIONAL  
BROTHERHOOD  
OF ELECTRICAL  
WORKERS**

900 Seventh Street, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20001  
(202) 833-7000

**EDWIN D. HILL**  
International President

**LINDELL K. LEE**  
International Secretary-Treasurer

April 24, 2008

The Honorable John Conyers, Jr.  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Rayburn House Office Bldg., Rm. 2426  
Washington, DC 20515-2214

Dear Congressman Conyers:

On behalf of the approximately 725,000 members of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW), I write to urge your support of the Emergency Extended Unemployment Compensation Act of 2008 (H.R. 5749), bipartisan legislation that would extend unemployment benefits 13 weeks for laid-off workers in all states, and an additional 13 weeks for those in high unemployment states.

Currently, there are over 1.3 million unemployed workers – 17.5 percent of all unemployed – who have been jobless more than six months. The number of displaced workers who have been unemployed for more than six months is at recession levels and is higher than when Congress extended unemployment insurance (UI) benefits in the 2001 and 1990-1991 recessions. Unless Congress acts quickly to extend UI benefits, an additional three million jobless workers, expected to exhaust their limited 26 weeks of state-based assistance by the end of this year, will find themselves with neither jobs nor federal benefits.

Their prospects for new employment are not good as there is only one job available for every two (1.93) people actively seeking employment. Payrolls continued to shrink in March marking the third month in a row of job losses, and the largest demise in five years. The number of private-sector jobs has fallen 300,000 since November, 2007.

This type of job loss shows the American economy needs a boost. An extension of UI will help; it is one of the most immediate forms of economic stimulus. According to a 1999 study commissioned by the U.S. Department of Labor, every dollar of UI benefits paid to laid-off workers produces a \$2.15 increase in the Gross Domestic Product.

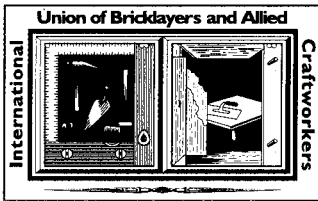
Extending UI benefits during the current economic downturn will help mitigate its effects on all by assisting those who need it most. I respectfully request your support for the Emergency Extended Unemployment Compensation Act of 2008 (H.R. 5749).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Edwin Hill", written in a cursive style.

Edwin D. Hill  
International President

EDH:lgd



**International  
Union of Bricklayers  
and Allied Craftworkers**

---

**John J. Flynn**

President

April 21, 2008

The Honorable Charles Rangel, Chairman  
Ways and Means Committee  
United States House of Representatives  
1102 Longworth Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Rangel:

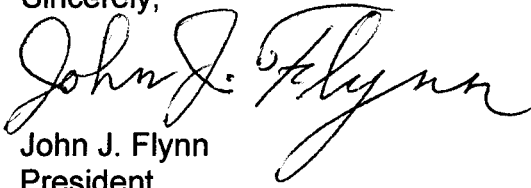
On behalf of the members of the International Union of Bricklayers and Allied Craftworkers ("BAC"), I am writing to thank you for your leadership in introducing H.R. 5749, the Emergency Extended Unemployment Compensation Act. Prompt passage of this legislation is critical given weaker than expected economic activity, growth in the ranks of the unemployed, and the expected 3.5 million Americans whom the Congressional Budget Office projects will exhaust their benefits this year.

You and the other co-sponsors of the Act are to be commended for recognizing the tremendous need for economic relief among all U.S. workers, in every geographic region and across all industries. The assistance proposed in H.R. 5749 will help tens of thousands of workers unemployed for extended periods through no fault of their own, deal with living costs, such as food and fuel, which seem to rise almost daily.

The construction industry, and its workforce, is particularly sensitive to downturns in economic activity. BAC represents tens of thousands of masonry-trowel trades craft workers throughout the United States, many of whom may need the extended unemployment benefits provided by your bill. As such, we offer our full support for passage of the bill.

Thank you again for your swift response to the growing crisis created by the current Administration's policies that, once again, have failed to address the needs of working people.

Sincerely,

  
John J. Flynn  
President

# INTERNATIONAL BROTHERHOOD OF TEAMSTERS

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JAMES P. HOFFA  
General President

25 Louisiana Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20001



C. THOMAS KEEGEL  
General Secretary-Treasurer

202.624.6800  
[www.teamster.org](http://www.teamster.org)

April 24, 2008

The Honorable Charles Rangel, Chairman  
Committee on Ways and Means  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

The International Brotherhood of Teamsters wishes to express its strong support for the bipartisan Emergency Extended Unemployment Compensation Act.

With the current unemployment rate at 5.1 percent, and many analysts expecting it to exceed 6 percent by the fourth quarter, prospects of an unemployed worker finding another job are increasingly bleak. It is taking longer and longer to find a job. The length of the search now exceeds 6 months on average, and an increasing number of the jobless are exhausting benefits before they find work, if they find it at all. Today there is one job for every two people actively seeking work. There are 1.3 million workers who have been jobless for more than 6 months, and this number is expected to climb. Approximately 3.5 million unemployed workers are expected to exhaust their benefits this year.

The Teamsters Union applauds the actions taken by the Ways and Means Committee to immediately provide up to 13 weeks of extended unemployment benefits in every State, and to provide an additional 13 weeks in States with high unemployment. We commend you, Chairman McDermott, and Ranking Member English, for your leadership in recognizing the need for an immediate response to the growing number of workers losing their jobs and the high and increasing number of long-term unemployed workers.

Losing a job is terrible and stressful. But, long-term unemployment puts an even greater strain on families as well as the economy, as savings are depleted, spending is constrained, and the jobless struggle with how to provide for their families.

The Honorable Charles Rangel, Chairman  
April 25, 2008  
Page 2

Extending unemployment benefits would help support families that have lost the most in this economic downturn as well as provide an effective economic stimulus. As you know, there is broad consensus that providing unemployment benefits is one of the most efficient ways to stimulate the economy since it helps those who are hard hit by the economic downturn and puts money into the hands of those who will quickly spend it, thus pumping money back into the local economy. That is why we believe extending unemployment insurance benefits for the families of the long-term jobless is the right thing to do, and smart economic policy.

Again, the Teamsters Union strongly supports H.R. 5749, and we urge its prompt passage by the House of Representatives.

Sincerely,



Frederick P. McLuckie  
Legislative Director  
Government Affairs Department

FPM/JDO/cwl



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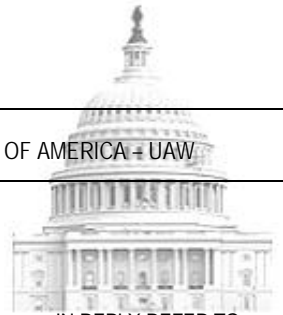
INTERNATIONAL UNION, UNITED AUTOMOBILE, AEROSPACE & AGRICULTURAL IMPLEMENT WORKERS OF AMERICA - UAW

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RON GETTELFINGER, President

ELIZABETH BUNN, Secretary-Treasurer

VICE PRESIDENTS: GENERAL HOLIEFIELD • BOB KING • CAL RAPSON • JIMMY SETTLES • TERRY THURMAN



IN REPLY REFER TO

May 7, 2008

1757 N STREET, N.W.  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20036  
TELEPHONE: (202) 828-8500  
FAX (202) 293-3457

Dear Representative:

Later this week the House is scheduled to take up the supplemental appropriations legislation. At that time, there is expected to be a vote on an amendment dealing with several priority domestic issues, including an extension of unemployment insurance benefits (UI), an increase in education benefits for veterans, and postponement of the Medicaid regulations proposed by the Bush administration. The UAW strongly supports these measures. On behalf of our one million active and retired members, we urge you to vote for this amendment.

The UI provisions are modeled on H.R. 5749, which was reported by the Ways and Means Committee with bipartisan support last month. These provisions would extend unemployment benefits for an additional 13 weeks for workers in all states and another 13 weeks for workers in "high unemployment" states, those that have at least six percent unemployment.

We believe our nation is already in an economic recession, one that could be long and deep. For four consecutive months, the economy has shed jobs, rather than creating 100,000 new jobs a month just to keep pace with population growth. Currently, there are four million more Americans looking for work and fewer than eight million job openings.

At the end of April, there were over 1.4 million unemployed workers who have been out of work and searching for a new job for more than six months. These are the long-term unemployed, who have exhausted their state UI benefits without being able to find reemployment. This level of long-term unemployment is at recession levels; indeed, it is higher than when Congress extended UI benefits in the 2001 and 1990-91 recessions.

Unless Congress acts immediately to extend unemployment benefits, an estimated three million jobless workers will run out of their limited 26 weeks of state benefits by the end of the year, with neither jobs nor federal benefits to rely on to support their families.

Extended unemployment benefits not only help laid off workers and their families, but are also an effective stimulus to the economy. Mark Zandi of Economy.com estimates that every dollar spent on unemployment insurance boosts the

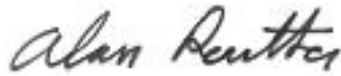
economy by \$1.73. Thus, extending unemployment benefits would give the economy a boost of more than \$1.7 billion per month.

Under the UI provisions, the extended benefits would be paid for out of the federal unemployment trust funds, which now have a surplus of over \$35 billion.

In addition to supporting the extension of UI benefits, the UAW supports the provisions in the amendment that would increase the level of education benefits for America's veterans. We also support the provisions postponing implementation of the Medicaid regulations proposed by the Bush administration that would curtail federal payments for this vital health care program and unfairly shift costs to states already burdened by the dismal condition of our national economy.

For all of these reasons, the UAW strongly supports the amendment to the supplemental appropriations bill dealing with these priority domestic issues. We urge you to vote for this critically important amendment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Alan Reuther".

Alan Reuther  
Legislative Director

BCS:AR/lb  
opeiu494  
L8443