

815 SIXTEENTH STREET, N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20006

RICHARD L. TRUMKA
PRESIDENT

ELIZABETH H. SHULER
SECRETARY-TREASURER

ARLENE HOLT BAKER
EXECUTIVE VICE-PRESIDENT



LEGISLATIVE ALERT!

(202) 637-5057

October 9, 2009

Dear Senator:

On behalf of the AFL-CIO, I am writing to urge you to vote for the Baucus/Reid amendment to the Emergency Unemployment Compensation Extension Act of 2009 (H.R. 3548), which would provide additional weeks of federally funded unemployment compensation to long-term unemployed workers in every state.

The Baucus/Reid amendment would provide 14 additional weeks of unemployment compensation for the long-term unemployed in every state, and an additional six weeks of benefits for those who live in states with a three-month unemployment rate of 8.5 percent or higher. The cost of this measure is offset by an extension of the Federal Unemployment Tax Act surcharge (amounting to \$14 per employee per year) until the end of 2011.

Failure to extend benefits would pull the safety net out from under laid-off workers who are struggling to find jobs that have become increasingly scarce. Over fifteen million Americans are currently unemployed and looking for work. A record five million workers have been unemployed for six months or more, and there are now six unemployed workers for every available job in the United States. Meanwhile, over one million Americans will have run out of all their unemployment benefits before the end of this year.

Swift passage of this legislation would help laid-off workers who desperately need assistance in an extraordinarily weak labor market. Jobless workers use their benefits to provide basic necessities for their families, and to forestall personal bankruptcies and home foreclosures. Without unemployment benefits to sustain workers and their families, the fiscal crisis facing local and state governments will continue to grow.

The AFL-CIO strongly urges you to vote for this vital piece of legislation and oppose any extraneous or weakening amendments.

Sincerely,

William Samuel, Director
GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT