

February 18, 2010

The Honorable Harry Reid  
United States Senate  
S-221 Capitol Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
United States Senate  
S-23- Capitol Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Richard Durbin  
United States Senate  
S-321 Capitol Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Jon Kyl  
United States Senate  
S-208 Capitol Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Max Baucus  
United States Senate  
511 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Charles Grassley  
United States Senate  
135 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
United States House of Representatives  
H-232 Capitol Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable John Boehner  
United States House of Representatives  
H-204 Capitol Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Steny Hoyer  
United States House of Representatives  
H-107 Capitol Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Eric Cantor  
United States House of Representatives  
H-307 Capitol Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Charles Rangel  
United States House of Representatives  
2354 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable David Camp  
United States House of Representatives  
341 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable James McDermott  
United States House of Representatives  
1035 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable John Linder  
United States House of Representatives  
1026 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressional Leaders:

We are writing to strongly urge the Senate and the House of Representatives to act immediately to continue the Recovery Act's aid to the jobless as a stand-alone measure through the end of 2010.

Congress and President Obama took bold action one year ago to enact major benefits for today's jobless families, including the extension of jobless benefits and subsidized COBRA coverage. Subsequent expansions of the program, including the 14-20 week expansion of Emergency Unemployment Compensation (EUC), have also gone a long way to respond to the severity of the crisis of long-term unemployment that has now gripped the nation, with more than 40% of all unemployed workers still struggling to find work after six months and more than six unemployed workers looking for every available job.

While the jobless aid provided by the Recovery Act has been significant, the decision of Congress to adopt limited extensions of the program have caused severe hardship, both for unemployed workers and the state systems that are struggling with severely outdated equipment and insufficient staff and resources to process over 10 million unemployment checks each week. Indeed, as result of the limited two-month extension that expires February 28th starting in the week of February 15th, the states will be forced to spend time and resources they can ill-afford to waste notifying workers that the extended UI programs are shutting down. They will also need to start reprogramming their computers to implement the required shut-down as of March 1<sup>st</sup>.

If Congress does not take final action by February 22nd, the states will no longer be in a position to reverse the process and there will be mass confusion among desperate workers whose only means to pay their groceries and housing is their limited unemployment benefits. Moreover, the delay will wreak havoc on the state agencies as a result of the extra work required to shut down the programs and the immediate need to respond to the flood of phone calls that will start coming in from panicked workers.

By every economic indicator, the extension of jobless aid provided by the Recovery Act should continue through the end of year. As recently documented by the Congressional Budget Office, the extension of jobless aid also provides the most significant boost to the economy and job growth of any policy option being debated by Congress. It provides \$1.90 in stimulus for every dollar spent, and will be responsible for creating 800,000 jobs this year alone. In spite of the importance of this program, the House of Representatives passed a jobs bill in December that includes an extension of jobless aid only through June and the recent draft of the Senate jobs bill only continues the program through May.

Given the severity of the crisis and latest evidence of the problems associated with a short-term continuation of the program, these limited extensions of jobless aid can no longer be sustained. These short-term extensions simply do not measure up to the realities facing unemployed workers in today's economy or to the serious challenges facing the state agencies that process the benefits.

Accordingly, we call on Congress to enact a stand-alone continuation of the jobless aid provisions of the Recovery Act as its first measure of business when it returns from recess, and to continue the program through the end of the year.

Sincerely,

9to5 Atlanta  
9to5 Bay Area (CA)  
9to5 Colorado  
9to5 Los Angeles  
9to5 Milwaukee  
9to5, National Association of Working Women  
AFT Pennsylvania  
Agenda for Children  
American Friends Service Committee  
Americans Association of University Women  
Americans for Democratic Action  
ARC Group Homes, Inc.  
Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Miller International Union Local 6, AFL-CIO  
Bucks County Central Labor Council  
California State Association of Counties  
Cambridge United for Justice with Peace  
Campaign for America's Future  
Center for Community Change  
Center for Law and Social Policy  
Center of Hope  
Change to Win  
Chester County Central Labor Council  
Coalition for Justice  
Coalition on Human Needs  
Collaborative Center for Justice  
Coloradans For Immigrant Rights, a project of the American Friends Service Committee  
Common Cause  
Common Good, Common Wealth - Pittsburgh  
Community Action New Mexico  
Community Action Partnership  
Community Legal Services, Inc., Philadelphia  
Connecticut Association of Nonprofits  
Connecticut Legal Services, Inc.  
Connecticut Voices for Children  
Cortland Area Child Care Council  
County Welfare Directors Association of California  
Covering Kentucky Kids and Families

D.C. Employment Justice Center  
Delaware County Central Labor Council  
Dominican Sisters of Adrian  
East Bay Center  
Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon  
1199 NUHHCE, AFSCME/AFL-CIO  
EMMAUS MISSION CENTER/ EL PUENTE  
Exodus Ministries, Inc.  
Farmworker Association of Florida, Inc  
First Focus Campaign for Children  
Five County Association of Governments  
Florida Legal Services  
Food Research and Action Center  
Friends Committee on National Legislation  
Georgia Rural Urban Summit  
Greater Boston Legal Services, Employment Law Unit  
Greater Hartford Legal Aid, Inc.  
Green Tree Federation of Teachers and Support Staff  
Half in Ten  
Harvest America Corporation  
Heartland Alliance for Human Needs & Human Rights  
Homeless Veteran's Reintegration Program  
Human Services Coalition of Oregon  
Idaho Community Action Network  
Illinois Maternal and Child Health Coalition  
Immokalee Multicultural Multipurpose Community Action Agency  
Influence State Policy  
Institute Justice Team, Sisters of Mercy of the Americas  
Interfaith Council of Amador  
Interfaith Worker Justice  
Local Union 126, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers  
International Union, United Automobile, Aerospace & Agricultural Implement Workers of  
America  
Jewish Labor Committee  
Jobs With Justice  
Karen Lee, Commissioner, Washington State Employment Security Department  
Kentucky Equal Justice Center  
Knoxville- Knox County Community Action Committee  
Laborers International Union Local 135  
Legal Aid Justice Center  
Legal Assistance Resource Center of Connecticut  
Legal Momentum  
Lincoln Tech Federation of Teachers  
Lorton Community Action Center

Love Our Children USA  
Lutheran Metro Ministry  
Metal Trades Department, AFL-CIO  
Methodist Healthcare Ministries  
Michigan Alliance of Cooperatives  
Michigan League for Human Services  
Michigan Unitarian Universalist Social Justice Network  
Missouri Association for Community Action  
MomsRising  
Mon Valley Unemployed Committee  
Montgomery County Central Labor Council, PA  
Montgomery County Community Action Development Commission  
Morris Heights Health Center  
NAACP  
Nashua Soup Kitchen & Shelter, Inc.  
Nashville Homeless Power Project  
National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd  
National Association of County Human Services Administrators  
National Association of Social Workers  
National Association of Social Workers Council of Chapter Executives  
National Association of Social Workers, West Virginia Chapter  
National Council of Jewish Women  
National Employment Law Project  
National Jobs for All Coalition  
National Organization for Women  
National Partnership for Women & Families  
National Priorities Project  
National Rural Social Work Caucus  
National Skills Coalition  
National Urban League  
National Women's Law Center  
NC Justice Center  
NETWORK: A National Catholic Social Justice Lobby  
New Haven Legal Assistance Association, Inc.  
New Haven Legal Association, Inc.  
New Haven Peoples Center  
New Jersey Tenants Organization  
New Mexico Voices for Children  
New York City Coalition Against Hunger  
NW Bronx For Change  
Ohio Association of Second Harvest Foodbanks  
PA Coalition to End Homelessness  
PA United for Single-Payer Healthcare  
Pennsylvania Council of Churches

Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry  
Pennsylvania NOW  
People Incorporated of Virginia  
People of Faith CT  
Philadelphia Unemployment Project  
Pittsburgh Community Services, Inc.  
Pottstown Federation of Teachers  
ProgressOhio  
Providence Connections Inc.  
Public Justice Center  
Resources for Children's Health  
RESULTS, Inc.  
RESULTS, Kalamazoo  
RESULTS, Sante Fe  
Roots of Promise, a project of the Thomas Merton Center  
Samaritan Center for Transitional Housing  
Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law  
Service Employees International Union  
Service Employees International Union, Local 668  
Single Stop USA  
Sisters of Charity of Cincinnati  
Sisters of Mercy West Midwest Justice Team  
Sisters of Mercy West Midwest Leadership Team  
Sisters of St. Francis  
Sisters of the Good Shepherd  
Soup Kitchen & Shelter, Inc.  
Southeastern Pennsylvania Area Labor Federation, AFL-CIO  
Steelworkers Organization of Active Retirees Chapter 31-9 South Chicago  
Sugar Law Center for Economic and Social Justice  
The Campaign for Community Change  
The Every Child Matters Education Fund  
The Leadership Council of the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary  
The Marianists  
The National Community Reinvestment Coalition  
The Xaverian Brothers  
Thomas BC Rogers & Project Community  
Tri-County Area Local of Postal Workers Union  
UHURU-Community Development Corporation  
Union for Reform Judaism  
United Church of Christ, Justice and Witness Ministries  
United for a Fair Economy  
United Labor Council of Reading and Berks County  
United Steelworkers  
United Way of Delaware County

United Way of the Midlands  
USAction  
Washington Community Action Network  
Washington Legal Clinic for the Homeless  
Washington State Employment Security Department  
West Baton Rouge Parish Community Action  
West Side Campaign Against Hunger  
Wisconsin State AFL-CIO  
Women Employed  
Women's Coalition of Washington  
Women's Law Project  
Women's International League for Peace and Freedom  
Woodhaven Federation of Teachers  
Working America  
WV Citizen Action Group  
Wyoming Coalition for the Homeless  
York County School of Technology Federation of Teachers