



PRESS STATEMENT

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zschiller@policymattersohio.org
216.361.9801

Congress must extend unemployment compensation

Benefits support families and bolster the economy

Earlier this year, Congress made historic improvements to the unemployment compensation (UC) program, providing crucial aid to families and the economy. However, the \$600 weekly UC supplement already has expired and other provisions are set to do so at the end of the year. Policy Matters Ohio Research Director Zach Schiller today joined Sen. Sherrod Brown and others for a virtual conversation hosted by the Ohio Organizing Collaborative. Schiller called on Congress to extend these important benefits.

The \$600 supplement “helped families pay the mortgage or the rent, make the car payment and keep the internet on,” Schiller said. “However, it supported not just the Ohio families who directly received it, but everyone in Ohio. It was a key reason why the economic slump wasn’t worse and even more businesses didn’t close.

“We need Congress to reinstate the \$600 supplement for as long as unemployment remains high,” he said.

If they don’t act by the end of the year, Congress could cut off unemployment benefits for hundreds of thousands of Ohioans. Almost 420,000 jobless workers claimed Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) in the week ended Sept. 26. PUA covers workers who don’t ordinarily qualify for UC, including the self-employed and those who don’t meet Ohio’s stringent earnings requirement. That same week, another 52,000 workers claimed Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation. PEUC provides 13 weeks of additional benefits to those who have exhausted 26 weeks of regular UC benefits. Amidst the continuing pandemic and high unemployment, federal leaders must extend both of these programs.

Schiller also noted that early in the pandemic, Governor DeWine waived work search requirements for UC recipients. However, this waiver will expire Dec. 1. “This needs to be extended as long as the public health emergency continues,” Schiller said.

Policy Matters Ohio is a nonprofit, nonpartisan state policy research institute with offices in Cleveland and Columbus.