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http://www.policymattersohio.org/pdf/JoblessBenefitsPR2010_06.pdf

Without Congressional action, nearly 100,000 Ohioans will lose jobless benefits in June

Nearly 100,000 jobless Ohioans will exhaust their unemployment benefits this month if action is not taken to extend them. The U.S. House of Representatives approved an extension before its Memorial Day break; the Senate should vote to do so immediately after returning June 7.

“Extended benefits for jobless workers not only provide crucial support for Ohio families, they bolster the economy,” said Zach Schiller, research director of Policy Matters Ohio. “Withdrawing them now would further hurt already devastated Ohio communities.”

Jobless workers in Ohio have been eligible for up to 73 weeks of federally paid benefits, in addition to the regular 26 weeks of state benefits. Those 73 weeks are broken into five segments of benefits, and without Congressional action, workers will stop receiving benefits when they reach the end of their current segment.

The Ohio Department of Job & Family Services has estimated that close to 100,000 Ohioans will run out of benefits this month if there is no extension, and the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) has made a similar estimate.¹ Tens of thousands more would lose their benefits in ensuing months. The National Employment Law Project, a New York-based policy and advocacy center, also has compiled estimates from DOL data on the federal program which demonstrate its importance:

- Currently, more than 189,000 workers in Ohio are collecting Emergency Unemployment Compensation, the temporary extension of federal jobless benefits.
- Since the program began in February 2009, it has pumped more than \$2.5 billion in federal benefits into those Ohio communities hardest hit by the recession, plus another \$483 million from the program’s \$25 boost in weekly benefits.
- Every month, about 4,400 workers in Ohio are estimated to rely on the COBRA program, which allows laid-off workers to continue their health insurance while paying the same rate that had been paid under their employer. A 65 percent subsidy for jobless workers’ COBRA benefits also is expiring along with extended unemployment benefits.

¹ DOL has estimated that without an extension, 86,100 Ohioans will run out of benefits by June 26, and that will grow to a total of 106,200 by July 3.

The House passed a bill restoring extended unemployment benefits through Nov. 30, but the Senate has yet to act on it. The bill passed by the House does not extend the health-insurance subsidy that jobless workers had been receiving, nor does it provide crucial aid to state Medicaid programs that had been in earlier versions of the bill. These omissions should be restored.

Nationally, there is only one job opening for every 5.6 unemployed workers, and long-term unemployment affects 46 percent of the 15.3 million out of work. The share of jobless who have been unemployed for more than 26 weeks is higher than any time since data started being collected soon after World War II, far higher than it was even during the early 1980s.

Ohio currently has 652,000 jobless workers, or 10.9 percent of the labor force.

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

