



November 8, 2011

The Honorable Sander M. Levin
The Honorable Lloyd Doggett
Committee on Ways & Means
U.S. House of Representatives
1106 Longworth House Office Building
Washington D.C. 20515

Re: Support for the Emergency Unemployment Compensation Extension Act (H.R. 3346)

Dear Ranking Member Levin and Congressman Doggett:

The National Women's Law Center strongly supports H.R. 3346, the Emergency Unemployment Compensation Extension Act. This urgently needed legislation will protect millions of jobless workers and their families from losing the lifeline that federal unemployment insurance benefits provide in this continuing jobs crisis.

Overall unemployment stands at nine percent and is expected to remain above eight percent through 2012. Nearly half of all jobless women and men have been looking for work for six months or more – but the jobs are simply not there. In fact, women have actually lost jobs, and their unemployment rate has risen, between the official start of the recovery in June 2009 and October 2011.

During the past 50 years, Congress has never allowed federal emergency unemployment insurance benefits to lapse when the unemployment rate was higher than 7.2 percent, for good reason. For many jobless workers, these modest benefits are the difference between hunger and food on the table, homelessness and keeping a roof overhead. If Congress fails to extend these programs, millions more Americans are likely to fall into poverty, and the fragile economy will suffer a major blow.

In addition to extending federal unemployment programs through 2012, H.R. 3346 would help states and employers. States that borrowed money from the federal government to cover the increased cost of unemployment insurance benefits would get a one-year moratorium on interest payments, and automatic tax increases on employers would be suspended, if states agree maintain current levels of state assistance for unemployed workers.

The Emergency Unemployment Compensation Extension Act would provide vital assistance to unemployed workers and their families, states, employers, and the economy. We hope Congress passes it without delay.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Joan Entmacher'.

Joan Entmacher
Vice President, Family Economic Security