

In tough economic times, Congress and the President have worked together to extend unemployment benefits when needed. The previous extensions of unemployment insurance during this current recession has helped many New Jersey residents keep a roof over their head and food on the table when times were tough. In this tight job market and with the economy just starting to show signs of recovery, there are still six unemployed workers for each job opening and more than five million people who have been unemployed for more than six months.

The Unemployment Compensation Extension Act of 2009, H.R. 3548, would extend an additional 13 weeks of unemployment benefits to individuals who have exhausted their current benefits in states with unemployment rates above 8.5 percent. With New Jersey's unemployment rate at 9.4 percent, by the end of September it is estimated that 22,000 New Jerseyans will have exhausted their unemployment benefits and have nowhere else to turn. This bill will provide them with direct relief during a difficult time.

Our government must help those in need as they seek new work. Morally, it is the right thing to do and the economists tell us that unemployment benefits are one of the most cost-efficient and fast-acting forms of economic stimulus.

The bill does not add to the deficit, by offsetting its cost with a one year extension of an employment tax that has been in place for 30 years.

Once this bill is signed into law it is estimated that by December, this 13-week extension of unemployment would benefit 1 million Americans—including 42,000 New Jersey residents—who will be looking for work and have exhausted their existing unemployment benefits.

Mr. LANGEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 3548, the Unemployment Compensation Extension Act of 2009, which will provide an additional 13 weeks of unemployment benefits to individuals in states with unemployment rates of 8.5 percent or higher. This bill provides a critical boost to the many Rhode Islanders, and Americans across the nation, who are struggling to find employment. In order to receive these benefits, workers must have lost a job through no fault of their own, be actively searching for a job, be able to work, and must have worked twenty weeks prior to being laid off. Only unemployed workers who become eligible for the additional weeks of benefits before January 1, 2010, will qualify for this extension.

I am encouraged by reports that our country's recession is easing, but that is little consolation to the many people still suffering in my home state. In Rhode Island, the unemployment rate has reached 12.8 percent, which is the third highest rate in the country. It is also estimated that nearly 4,500 Rhode Islanders will exhaust their benefits before the end of this year. With recent reports estimating that there are six job seekers for every job opening, Congress must act to help workers through this challenging time.

I understand the hardships Rhode Islanders are facing, and that is why rebuilding our economy is the top priority for me and this Congress. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act has saved the jobs of teachers, police officers, and nurses across our state and has created jobs through new highway

and infrastructure projects, with more coming online in the next few months. I am also pleased to see that the programs we have passed are being turned into smart investments in our future, such as the creation of clean energy jobs in our state through weatherization and offshore wind development.

As the President has stated, it may take some time before we see significant improvements in our unemployment rate, but I am confident that the programs we are putting into place will yield results over the next several months, while the longer-term investments we're making will ensure that our workforce and our job market are stronger in the years to come. While unemployment benefits and stimulus programs help jumpstart our economy in the short term, Congress must also work to build a new foundation for a lasting recovery. That is why we are making much needed reforms to our health care and financial systems and investing in our education and workforce training systems.

As Members of Congress, we have the power to give hard-working Americans another chance to continue their job search and provide for their families. I encourage my colleagues to pass this bill to help those who are most vulnerable during these trying times.

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this legislation and thank Chairman McDERMOTT for his leadership on this bill. H.R. 3548 provides an extension of unemployment benefits for up to 13 weeks for Americans across the country in states with the highest unemployment rates.

As of August 2009, the unemployment rate in America is a staggering 9.7 percent. Jobs are continuing to be shipped overseas, with the manufacturing sector boasting the biggest losses. Over 216,000 jobs were lost just last month. Ohio is one of 15 states with an unemployment rate above the national average and the Economic Policy Institute is projecting that racial disparities in high unemployment states will continue to worsen in 2010.

In recent weeks, I have received numerous calls from constituents who have already run out of unemployment benefits or are on the verge of doing so. This legislation provides a critical, if temporary fix to their problems.

Twenty-nine states currently qualify for the 13 week unemployment extension under this legislation, with more states sure to follow suit. I strongly support this legislation and urge my colleagues to vote in favor of this bill.

Mr. McDERMOTT. I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Washington (Mr. McDERMOTT) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3548, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. DAVIS of Kentucky. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

Accordingly (at 4 o'clock and 7 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. ALTMIRE) at 6 o'clock and 30 minutes p.m.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 324, SANTA CRUZ VALLEY NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA ACT

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 111-263) on the resolution (H. Res. 760) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 324) to establish the Santa Cruz Valley National Heritage Area, and for other purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, proceedings will resume on motions to suspend the rules previously postponed.

Votes will be taken in the following order:

House Resolution 441, by the yeas and nays;

H.R. 2971, by the yeas and nays;

H.R. 3548, by the yeas and nays.

Proceedings on H.R. 2215 and House Concurrent Resolution 163 will resume later in the week.

The first electronic vote will be conducted as a 15-minute vote. Remaining electronic votes will be conducted as 5-minute votes.

HONORING CATHOLIC SISTERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 441, as amended, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. LYNCH) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 441, as amended.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 412, nays 0, not voting 20, as follows:

[Roll No. 720]

YEAS—412

Ackerman
Aderholt

Adler (NJ)
Akin

Alexander
Altmire