

Rothman Pushes For Extension Of Federal Unemployment Benefits

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Washington, DC - In an effort to extend federal unemployment benefits for more than 4 million unemployed American workers, including more than 200,000 New Jerseyans, Congressman Steve Rothman (D-NJ9) recently signed a petition to force a House vote on a measure to lengthen benefits. The current federal unemployment benefit program is set to expire on December 27, barring those who exhaust their state unemployment benefits after that date from becoming eligible for federal assistance. Rothman said that Congress must act now because both the House and Senate are scheduled to be in recess when the unemployment benefit program is set to expire.

"The clock is ticking for Congress to pass this unemployment benefits bill for those Americans who are out of work, but still need to put food on the table, purchase clothing for their children, or make their mortgage payments," Rothman said. "President Bush's handling of the economy has resulted in the loss of more than 3 million private sector jobs and increased the debt by \$3 trillion. Last year, the Republicans left town before extending unemployment benefits - leaving hundreds of thousands of jobless Americans to worry over the holiday season about how they will make ends meet. Congress cannot in good conscience adjourn for the year without making sure that hundreds of thousands of unemployed workers continue to receive help while they search for work."

With the Republican House leadership refusing to schedule the measure for a vote, the petition on unemployment benefits that Rothman signed is the only way to get the measure considered. If the petition, which is known as a Discharge Petition, gets 218 signatures, then the House must vote on the measure.

The Discharge Petition Rothman signed will allow immediate consideration of a bill to extend the availability of the federal benefits program for an additional six months for workers who will become unemployed during that time period, increase the amount of benefits to 26 weeks, include coverage for roughly one million workers who have already exhausted their extended benefits, and expand unemployment insurance coverage for low-wage and part-time workers.

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