



For Immediate Release: December 13, 2011

Contact: Tim Bradley, 314-440-9936

## NELP STATEMENT ON HOUSE VOTE ON [H.R. 3630](#)

**CHRISTINE OWENS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

Today's vote by the House of Representatives to cut unemployment insurance and facilitate drug testing of Americans who lose their jobs through no fault of their own is cold-hearted and counterproductive. This tightening of the screws on those who are already suffering so greatly will hurt millions of unemployed workers and their families and will further damage the economy.

H.R. 3630 passed on a largely party-line vote, 234 to 193, with 14 Republicans voting against it and 10 Democrats voting in support.

Long-term unemployed workers are not lazy slackers who choose an unemployment check over a paycheck. They are millions of men and women—family, friends and neighbors, many of whom have worked for years—whose lives and livelihoods have been chewed up and spit out by the nation's worst economy in 80 years. With the number of officially unemployed job seekers still outnumbering job openings by more than four-to-one, it's no wonder so many long-term unemployed workers cannot find work: there simply are not enough jobs.

The pain of sustained unemployment is hard and humiliating enough for these Americans. The last thing they need is for a callous Congress to rub insulting and demeaning salt into the wounds, by cutting the vital lifeline these workers and their families rely on and authorizing drug testing of millions of law-abiding unemployed workers as a condition of receiving the unemployment insurance assistance they have earned and so desperately need.

It is travesty enough that we have entered yet another holiday season with deep uncertainty over whether or how the vital lifeline of support millions of unemployed workers rely on will be maintained. It would be tragic if Congress compounds the travesty by cutting urgently needed assistance and imposing needless conditions on their receipt.

Unemployed workers—indeed, all of America—deserve better than this. We call on the Senate to repudiate the House vote and to pass an extension of the federal unemployment insurance programs that will maintain the benefits unemployed workers and our economy need, without imposing onerous, obnoxious and unnecessary requirements on unemployed workers or the states that administer these programs. And we call on the House to start over, and to pass an unemployment insurance renewal that will be responsive to the real jobs crisis we face in America and to the real needs of those Americans who are the frontline casualties of this crisis.

Read NELP's analysis of H.R. 3630 [here](#). The National Employment Law Project is a non-partisan, not-for-profit organization that conducts research and advocates on issues affecting low-wage and unemployed workers. For more about NELP, visit [www.nelp.org](http://www.nelp.org).

###