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CONTACT: Emma Stieglitz, emmaS@berlinrosen.com, 646.200.5307
Danny Massey, daniel@berlinrosen.com, 646.200.5323

CAMPAIGN LAUNCHES TO SAVE FEDERAL EMERGENCY UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION AS NATION APPROACHES FISCAL CLIFF

2 Million Americans Stand To Lose Unemployment Insurance Overnight Unless Washington Forges a Deal

WASHINGTON, DC—As Washington turns its attention to negotiations around the fiscal cliff, a broad coalition of more than 35 organizations launched a campaign Tuesday to reauthorize Emergency Unemployment Compensation (EUC), which is set to expire between Christmas and the New Year. To kick off the campaign, the National Employment Law Project released a new report, [*Don't Push Jobless Americans Off The Cliff*](#). It shows that unless Washington acts, the EUC program faces a hard termination that would cut off support to **two million unemployed Americans** overnight, taking away the subsistence income they depend on to support their families as they search for new work. Assuming job growth continues on its current trend, **one million more unemployed jobseekers** would join their ranks by April of 2013.

"Unless Congress acts to renew EUC, millions of workers who are struggling to find a new job in what is still a very tough economy will be thrown out in the cold," said **Christine Owens, executive director of the National Employment Law Project**. "EUC allows workers to continue to cover their families' basic expenses and in many cases enables workers to go through training programs so they can focus on their job search and re-enter the market with new and needed skills. It's the lifeline that keeps these workers connected to the labor force."

Even as the economy slowly improves, [*long-term unemployment remains a crisis*](#). Today, 5 million Americans, or 40 percent of all unemployed workers, have been out of work for six months or more, and are considered "long-term unemployed."

"I've worked my whole adult life, helped support my family and put my son through college. Unemployment insurance, and especially the federal benefits extension I've been receiving, helps us pay our most critical bills," said Richard Crowe of Wintersville, OH who was laid off in May 2012 from his job at a steel company where he worked for 34 years. "If we're cut off at the end of December, we won't be able to maintain our fuel, heat and utilities, not to mention the payments on the college loans for our son that we still owe. And if we can't pay that, we could lose our home."

With leaders on both sides of the aisle approaching negotiations with renewed focus, the coalition, led by NELP, is reaching out to key legislators involved in the debate. Rep. Sander Levin (D-MI), the Ways and Means committee's ranking member, and Human Resources Subcommittee Ranking Member Lloyd Doggett (D-TX) affirmed their commitment to renewing EUC on Monday with the release of the committee's [*report*](#) on the issue.

The campaign will also include an online grassroots mobilization of unemployed workers around the country who face a cut-off of benefits to pressure Congressional leaders to ensure prompt action. According to the Ways and Means report, the states that would be hardest hit by the cut-off are California, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Georgia, Florida and Texas—home to more than half, or 1.14 million, of all the workers whose benefits would be terminated.

Over the next five weeks, NELP will release a series of weekly reports highlighting the stories of individual unemployed workers and how EUC is helping them to bridge the gap during their job search. They will address how EUC helps alleviate hardship for families and children; helps get workers back on their feet; positively impacts the economy, especially in the holiday season; and how the program has already been scaled back even though unemployment remains high.

“Our elected leaders need to put partisanship aside and work together to forge a deal that protects EUC for so many millions of Americans still struggling to find jobs,” said Owens. “It’s critical that we maintain basic income security for working families while our economy is not generating enough new jobs. Supporting unemployed workers through their job search is in the best interest of millions of families and our economy as a whole.”

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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