
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR ISSUES WARNING TO CONGRESS



According to a report from the U.S. Department of Labor, 400,000 Americans will lose their unemployment benefits in the first weeks of March if Congress does not extend unemployment insurance benefits in the coming days. By May, nearly 3 million people would be left without benefits, the Department of Labor reports. The U.S. House of Representatives unanimously approved a plan last week to temporarily extend benefits, but some in the Senate are working to block the extension, specifically Sen. Jim Bunning of Kentucky, the Department of Labor said in a press release. In addition to the loss of unemployment insurance benefits, an estimated 500,000 workers who lose their jobs will be ineligible for subsidies to cover the cost of health care this month. For the year, an estimated 5 million workers will be ineligible for the Recovery Act COBRA subsidy that covers 65 percent of the cost of coverage. "It is essential that Congress extend the unemployment insurance and COBRA subsidy programs that are part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act," said Secretary of Labor Hilda L. Solis. "The consequences of partisan obstructionism could not be clearer. If the extension is not approved immediately, millions of Americans could lose the safety net programs they deserve and desperately need."

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