

## D.C. VOTES TUESDAY ON UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS



Lynette Green, a laid off worker from a temporary job in Virginia in March, moved to Atlanta with her two kids in the month of June. She performed the move in hopes of finding a job, running through her state unemployment payments and receiving a federal extension in the process, according to the [Atlanta Journal-Constitution](#). "The benefits are very important; they help me pay my bills," said Green, 32. "I used the money mainly for my kids, for their transportation and clothing when they started school." On December 31, extended federal unemployment benefits will expire. Most federal unemployment benefits can last up to 73 weeks. On Tuesday, the United States House of Representatives will vote on whether to continue paying the benefits into January 2013 or not. Those against extended the benefits, mostly Republicans, claim that having benefits that last for two years are an incentive not to work. Those who support the extension claim that they are needed in one of the worst job markets in decades. According to the Georgia Department of Labor, the state has a 10.2 percent unemployment rate and has 112,000 residents collecting federal jobless benefits. There are another 71,000 residents of the state who receive checks from Georgia, which last 26 weeks. According to the Georgia budget and Policy Institute, if the extension is not granted, residents would see their benefits end early in 2012. "We can't turn our back on those who were laid off by no fault of their own," said Clare Richie, who is a senior policy analyst and a member of the nonpartisan think tank. "The payments help thousands of families make ends meet until they can find another job." Jack Kingston, a U.S. Representative from Savannah, had the following to say: "Reducing the time I think is a way to increase employment," Kingston said. "In talking to hundreds of employers, that's what we're getting. And I know that a lot of advocates of extending unemployment with no strings attached, I can promise you they've never sat and talked to series and series of employers who deal with this on a daily basis." The new bill, written by House Republican leaders, would lower the federal extension to 33 weeks from 73 weeks. It would also allow the states in the country to scale back their programs as well. John Lewis, the Democratic U.S. Representative from Atlanta, had the following to say: "These men and women, mothers and fathers, they didn't lose their jobs by any fault of their own," Lewis said. "It's because of the downturn in the economy, and people want to work. They want a job and we need to help them. They need to pay their rent, pay for their children's education, pay for food, pay their mortgages, automobile notes. They need help and this is the right time to do it."