



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 110th CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

House of Representatives

STATEMENT OF REP. JOHN LEWIS (D-GA)
IN SUPPORT OF EXTENDING UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS IN THE EMERGENCY
SUPPLEMENTAL LEGISLATION

JUNE 19, 2008

Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of including the extension of unemployment benefits in the emergency supplemental bill that the House is considering today.

First, I would to express my deep gratitude to Chairman McDermott, Ranking Member Weller, and the Income Security and Family Support Subcommittee for all their hard work on this important piece of legislation. I am proud to be a Member of the Subcommittee and to have cosponsored the legislation that provided the framework for this compromise. I also thank Chairman Rangel and Ranking Member McCrery for their leadership and support in negotiating a compromise.

It is essential that congressional leaders were finally able to come together and find a way to help hard-working Americans. The need for this legislation is critical. It is a first step of hopefully many to jumpstart our economy. Today there are 200,000 more long-term, jobless Americans than the last emergency unemployment assistance extension in 2002.

My constituents call and email and write the same question over and over again. They want to know what Congress is doing to support them during the current recession. Almost every month, unemployment is on the rise while higher gas and food prices are making it even harder for Americans to make ends meet. Our duty is simple—we must show the American people that we hear them, that we understand them, and that we will act.

We are a great nation, but we cannot continue to be great unless we honor our commitment to everyone in need. In times like these, we must use every tool at our disposal to help those who want and need to work. Unemployed workers cannot wait. They rightfully expect Congress's full support in their fight to become gainfully reemployed.

I urge my colleagues to support extending unemployment benefits now. It's the right thing to do for Americans, and it's the right thing to do for our economy.

Thank you.

###