



# **Durbin, Duckworth Join Schumer And Wyden To Introduce New Legislation To Extend Expanded Unemployment Insurance & Require Program Continue Providing B**

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WASHINGTON — U.S. Senators Dick Durbin (D-IL) and Tammy Duckworth (D-IL) joined Senators Chuck Schumer (D-NY) and Ron Wyden (D-OR) to introduce the *American Workforce Rescue Act*, bold, new legislation that would establish “automatic stabilizers” to ensure unemployment benefits remain available for working families during periods of persistent unemployment, a priority for Senate Democrats in the next COVID-19 bill. The proposal would extend the \$600 increase in weekly unemployment insurance (UI) benefits, which Senate Democrats secured in the *CARES Act*, beyond July 31, 2020, until a state’s three-month average total unemployment rate falls below 11 percent. The benefit amount then reduces by \$100 for every percentage point decrease in the state’s unemployment rate, until the rate falls below six percent.

These critical, enhanced unemployment insurance benefits included in the *CARES Act* are set to expire at the end of July 2020. Meanwhile, more than 33 million Americans are currently receiving unemployment insurance or are still awaiting benefit approval. Over-burdened, under-resourced state and local governments are grappling with unprecedented economic turmoil—and many Americans who returned to work have again been laid off.

“This public health and economic crisis has bruised our economy and left many families without a steady income. While Senator McConnell has felt no ‘urgency’ to act, I’m continuing to push for additional support for Americans struggling with financial

hardship,” said Durbin. “I’m proud to join my colleagues in introducing the *American Workforce Rescue Act* to ensure those who have lost their jobs can continue to make ends meet with increased and extended unemployment benefits.”

“The economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic is still being felt by millions of Americans, yet Senator McConnell and the Republicans refuse to take action on the next relief package,” Duckworth said. “Struggling families across Illinois know just how urgently federal action is needed to continue expanded unemployment insurance benefits, which is why I’m proud to help introduce the *American Workforce Rescue Act* to help do that. I’ll keep doing everything I can to help make sure Illinoisans and all Americans have the support they need to make it through this ongoing crisis.”

While enhanced unemployment benefits are set to expire on July 31, it’s clear the unemployment crisis will not. This legislation gives American families confidence that they will be able to draw on these vital UI benefits to pay rent and put food on the table as long as the economic crisis continues. Expanded unemployment benefits established in earlier COVID-19 legislation remain a critical lifeline for workers and families. All Americans—particularly lower-wage workers and communities of color ravaged by COVID-19—must remain equipped with the resources needed to stay afloat during the current, pandemic-fueled economic crisis, and the recovery period to come.

The legislation would extend critical unemployment benefits in each state based on economic conditions—not arbitrary cut-off dates established by Congress that disregard need. The *American Workforce Rescue Act* also extends the 13 weeks of extended benefits provided by the Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (PEUC) program in the *CARES Act* until March 27, 2021, and these benefits will remain available for as long as a state’s unemployment rate is above 5.5 percent, with the number of weeks of benefits available increasing by 13 for each percentage point the unemployment rate increases between 5.5 percent and 8.5 percent.

Additionally, the bill extends other critical unemployment benefits included in the *CARES Act*, including the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA), which provides coverage to the self-employed, gig workers, and others who are not eligible for traditional unemployment insurance, through March 2021, after which the benefits are tied to states’ unemployment levels.

A summary of the bill text can be found [here](#).