

# Conference Agreement on Unemployment Insurance

- Rejects House Republican proposal to slash benefits and impose onerous new restrictions on the unemployed.
- Retains the current maximum level (99 weeks) of Unemployment Insurance through May, reduces the maximum to 79 over the summer and to 73 in September – all depending on a state’s unemployment rate.
- Increases benefits in some states beyond levels in current law for the next three months by permitting high unemployment states triggering off the Extended Benefits program to access 10 additional weeks. Some states will continue to utilize EB through the summer.
- Rejects new barriers to benefits, such as GOP proposals to require UI recipients to have a high school diploma or be in a GED program and to allow blanket drug testing of UI applicants (such testing would be limited to only those losing their jobs because of unlawful use of a controlled substance and those seeking employment in occupations generally requiring a drug test as regulated by the Secretary of Labor).

## Background

The agreement would guarantee continued Federal unemployment benefits through the remainder of this year, while gradually reducing the number of weeks in the Emergency Unemployment Compensation (EUC) program through a 3-step process.

Throughout this period, the Extended Benefits (EB) program, which provides a maximum of 20 weeks of benefits after an individual exhausts EUC would continue under current law, phasing out as a state’s unemployment rates improves in comparison to three years ago.

From March through May – The level of unemployment insurance benefits continue equal to an extension of current law, and high unemployment states losing benefits under the EB program would get an extra 10 weeks. Between 89 and 99 weeks of total unemployment benefits available in high unemployment states between the EUC program and the EB program.

From June through August – The unemployment rate requirement would increase in three of the four tiers of the Emergency Unemployment Compensation (EUC) program. Up to 79 weeks of total benefits available in high unemployment States with a few states continuing to receive additional EB weeks as under current law.

From September through December – EUC benefits would be reduced by 6 weeks in all States. This would cap total unemployment benefits at 73 weeks by this fall.

## **Agreement on Weeks of Unemployment Benefits**

Impact on the Emergency Unemployment Compensation (EUC) Program

### *Changes Under Proposal*

<i>Tier 1</i>	Current Law	March-May	June-Aug	Sept-Dec
Weeks	20	20	20	14
% unemployed	0	0	0	0
<i>Tier 2</i>				
Weeks	14	14	14	14
% unemployed	0	0	6%	6%
<i>Tier 3</i>				
Weeks	13	13	13	9
% unemployed	6%	6%	7%	7%
<i>Tier 4</i>				
Weeks	6	6, unless losing EB, then 16	6	10
% unemployed	8.5%	8.5%	9%	9%

NOTE: All states continue to have access to the current law Extended Benefits program which provides up to 20 additional weeks of unemployment insurance depending on a state's unemployment rate. Most states are projected to lose eligibility to this program by the end of the summer.