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House Passes Measure that Would Help 26,000 Out of Work CT Residents

WASHINGTON, D.C.- U.S. Congressman John B. Larson (CT-01) voted for an amendment Wednesday night to extend unemployment insurance for the two million workers that have lost their benefits or will exhaust them over the next six months, including 26,000 in Connecticut. Congressman George Miller (D-CA) offered the amendment to H.R. 3030, the Community Services Block Grant Reauthorization. If the provision survives through the conference committee, it will extend unemployment insurance to those that have been out of work for more than 26 weeks. The amendment passed the House by a vote of 227-179, with 39 Republicans, one independent, and all 187 House Democrats present voting in favor of the measure.

"In the midst of this sluggish economy that is creating very few jobs, two million workers, including 26,000 in Connecticut, have already lost their unemployment benefits or will lose them in the next six months," said Larson. "This Congress has seen fit to pass trillions of dollars in tax cuts mainly benefiting the wealthiest Americans, so it is only fitting that it extend very modest unemployment benefits to those Americans that are out of work. It is very unfortunate that some members of the Republican Leadership have called this effort a political stunt and have already suggested the amendment may be dropped in conference committee. The House has done the right thing, but the effort to extend unemployment insurance continues to face an uphill battle against the Republican Leadership."

The federal unemployment program expired at the end of the year, denying assistance to approximately 80,000-90,000 people nationwide each week since December 21 and leaving those who ran out of state unemployment benefits over the holidays without any federal help. Nationally, only 1,000 jobs were created in December.

According to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, never have so many unemployed workers exhausted their regular unemployment benefits without being able to receive additional aid, since such statistics have been collected. Already this month, some 375,000 unemployed individuals are exhausting their state benefits, and will have neither a paycheck nor extended unemployment insurance benefits. The amendment would authorize an additional six months of unemployment benefits.

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