



LEGISLATIVE ALERT

April 6, 2014

Dear Senator:

I am writing on behalf of the AFL-CIO to urge you to vote for the Protecting Volunteer Firefighters and Emergency Responders Act of 2014 (H.R. 3979), bipartisan legislation to retroactively extend the federal Emergency Unemployment Compensation (EUC) program. Restoration and extension of the benefits program will provide a critical lifeline for workers and play an essential role in sustaining small businesses and local communities across the nation.

H.R. 3979 will help to alleviate hardship for 2.8 million jobless workers. Though our economy is slowly recovering and the official unemployment rate has slowly crept down to 6.7% percent, there are still 1.2 million fewer jobs in our economy than six years ago when the “great recession” began. Thirty-six percent of all unemployed workers have been unable to find jobs for six or more months, and the average unemployed worker searches for a job for 36 weeks, 10 weeks longer than the maximum weeks of state benefits. Unemployment benefits average a modest \$300 per week and allow jobless workers to provide for their family while searching for work.

Bipartisan majorities of Congress since 1958 have passed emergency unemployment compensation (EUC) benefits whenever the rates of long-term unemployment have been as high as they are today. The AFL-CIO urges you to restore and extend this program by voting for the Protecting Volunteer Firefighters and Emergency Responders Act of 2014 (H.R. 3979).

Sincerely,

William Samuel, Director
GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT