

# UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE EXTENSION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. FUDGE) for 5 minutes.

Ms. FUDGE. Mr. Speaker, I rise to address the urgent need to extend unemployment insurance for struggling Americans. Forty-five percent of all unemployed workers—more than 6 million people—have been out of work for more than 6 months.

Karen, from Cleveland, was laid off in March. She was laid off from a law firm due to budget constraints. She is 62 years old and unable to find a job in this economy. Unemployment insurance is helping her to get by with just the basic necessities. It is allowing her to pay for expensive but necessary prescriptions. She is actively looking for work, but she is afraid that if her unemployment benefits are cut, she will lose her house. Karen's State unemployment benefits can run out at the end of December.

□ 1020

If Congress fails to act to renew the Federal unemployment insurance program, she'll become just another statistic, one of the millions of Americans who identify themselves with the 99 percent. Karen, along with 6 million Americans, will be cut off from emergency lifeline saving resources unless Congress acts.

Sandra, of Cleveland Heights, lost her job in April 2011. It's her third lay-off. She is 59 years old. She never thought she would find herself in this position at this age.

Rather than defaulting on her mortgage, she has used up all of her retirement savings. Now she is deeper into debt. When her unemployment funds run out, it's likely she will default. And being an older worker, it makes it even harder.

We see this scenario all too often across this Nation, hardworking Americans getting laid off, using up their savings, and then losing their homes. We've seen foreclosure rates soar, and Americans are falling behind on their mortgage payments at a very rapid rate. In my district, more than 13 percent of homeowners are 90 or more days behind on their mortgage.

In 2010, unemployment benefits kept 3 million Americans, including nearly 1 million children, from falling into poverty. Extending unemployment insurance can prevent the loss of over 500,000 jobs, according to the Economic Policy Institute—500,000 jobs.

You know why? Because UI payments go directly into the economy. They support local businesses. They help create jobs and reduce the demand for public services. If we don't extend unemployment insurance, it would be the equivalent of pulling nearly \$90 billion out of the economy in 2012.

There's one more story I'd like to tell you. It's from Molly in Toledo. I tell Molly's story because it embodies the frustration felt by thousands upon

thousands of American across this country.

Molly has battled unemployment since October 2008. She wonders how the rich and powerful expect people like her to survive without good-paying jobs. "Are we just supposed to die," she asks? "Commit suicide? Starve to death while we are homeless and on the streets?"

Molly says: "The deck really seems to be stacked against ordinary Americans. No one with any real power seems to care, except Warren Buffett."

"I'm trying to find a good job," she says, "or any job for that matter. We, the unemployed are demonized by the right and discriminated against for being out of work. We're too old or overqualified or underqualified, or we're the wrong color. What has happened to my country?" she asks.

These are the stories of everyday Americans who are struggling to get by. This is not about Democrats and Republicans. This is about coming together to help millions of unemployed Americans get through the worst economic recession since the Great Depression. It's about helping our economy grow and about creating jobs.

Americans are frustrated with the decline of the middle class and the lack of good-paying jobs. But these honorable citizens haven't given up, and neither can we. We must act now. We must extend unemployment insurance.

## WHY ARE WE STILL IN AFGHANISTAN?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES) for 5 minutes.

Mr. JONES. Mr. Speaker, when we were home during the Thanksgiving break, like all my colleagues, I did as much as I could to be with the people of the Third District of North Carolina. The Third District is the home of Camp Lejeune Marine Base, Cherry Point Marine Air Station, and Seymour Johnson Air Force Base, and over 60,000 retired veterans in the Third District.

Since coming back to Washington, I've done two town meetings by phone. What I heard while I was home during Thanksgiving and the two town meetings: Why are we still in Afghanistan?

When I hear my colleagues in both parties talking about the problems facing the American people—unemployment benefits, extending the tax cuts for middle class America—we all grapple with, both parties, how we are going to pay for it.

Well, there is a man in Afghanistan that is a crook and corrupt, who gets \$10 billion a month that he doesn't have to worry about. Poor Americans are out here doing the best they can in a very difficult economy, and we can't help them, but we can help a corrupt leader in Afghanistan. It makes no sense. I hope that this Congress will come together and say to the President, let's not wait till 2014.

How many more American boys and girls will have to die and give their legs in the next 3 years for a corrupt leader? I've asked the Department of Defense, and I wrote Secretary Panetta and asked him that question. Give me your projections of how many more young men and women will have to die and lose their legs. I hope that I get that response soon.

That brings me to the point of a young marine I saw at Walter Reed/Bethesda about 3 weeks ago. There were four marines from the Third District of North Carolina. Three have lost both legs, and the one that had lost only one leg, a corporal, mom sitting in the room, said to me, Sir, may I ask you a question? I said certainly you may. Why are we still in Afghanistan? And I looked at him and I said, I don't know why we're still there.

Mr. Speaker, it makes no sense. The American people and the people of the Third District of North Carolina are saying, we have won; bin Laden is dead; al Qaeda has been dispersed all over the world.

Mr. Speaker, it is time, as we debate these very difficult, complex issues for our Nation, that we get smart with our foreign policy. And smart means, let's don't try to police the world.

History has proven you will never change Afghanistan. It will never change, no matter what we do or any other country tries to do.

So, Mr. Speaker, beside me is a poster with a flag-draped coffin coming off the plane at Dover. And with humility I tell you today, Mr. Speaker, I've signed over 10,400 letters to families and extended families who've lost loved ones in Afghanistan and Iraq.

I thank God that He has allowed me to have a heart large enough to feel the pain of war, because I've never been to war. But when I sign those letters, I feel the pain of the families, and I lick every envelope that I send.

Mr. Speaker, with that, I want to close my comments by asking God to please bless our men and women in uniform, God to please bless the families who've lost loved ones fighting in Afghanistan and Iraq. God, please bless the House and Senate that we will do what's right for the American people. Bless Mr. Obama that he will do what is right for the American people.

And three times I will say, God, please, God, please, God, please continue to bless America.

## UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE EXTENSION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. ELLISON) for 5 minutes.

Mr. ELLISON. Mr. Speaker, before I begin my remarks, I want to publicly associate myself with everything WALTER JONES just said. He is absolutely right.

Mr. Speaker, this holiday season Congress has chances, a couple of chances right in front of them to do

what's right for the American people and to side with the overwhelming percentage of Americans suffering out there in this economy.

For an entire year, the majority in the House has not offered a single bill to create a single job. In fact, the only thing that the Congress has been doing is creating an environment where public sector jobs are cut, and where private sector jobs, though they have been growing, are offset by those public sector cuts, leaving us with an unemployment rate which we're happy to have at 8.6 percent, but within the historical context is still a national disgrace and an outrage to have unemployment at 8.6 percent for so very long. But we're happy to have it because it has been as high as 10.

And now we're threatening to leave more than 2 million Americans, including 13,000 in my home State of Minnesota, out in the cold during the holiday season by taking away their unemployment insurance.

Right now, 14 million people are unemployed, and companies really aren't hiring. For most of these people, unemployment insurance is the only thing that's keeping them in their homes and not out on the street.

According to the Census Bureau, unemployment insurance has pulled 3.2 million Americans out of poverty last year. And that's why Congress needs to make sure that all Americans, Mr. Speaker, continue to have this vital lifeline available.

Any credible economist will tell you that unemployment insurance creates jobs. Every dollar invested in unemployment insurance yields a return of \$1.52 in economic growth.

At least 200,000 jobs would be lost if Congress fails to pass the extension of unemployment insurance benefits. Congress must not leave Washington for the holidays without extending unemployment benefits that create jobs and put money into the pockets and on the tables of millions of Americans.

□ 1030

Both Democrat and Republican politicians, we together have not passed that jobs bill. While the Republicans are in the majority, and I believe bear the weight of the responsibility, it's a responsibility of every Member of Congress to call for the extension of unemployment insurance benefits and jobs at this critical time.

America can't wait. We shouldn't be leaving hardworking Americans high and dry this holiday season. This holiday season, we can spur economic growth, create jobs, and strengthen the middle class by doing the right thing of extending unemployment insurance benefits.

On behalf of the good people who play by the rules and lost their jobs because of Wall Street greed, and while this majority looked the other way, I urge all of my colleagues to support the extension of unemployment insurance benefits.

#### AFGHANISTAN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. KINZINGER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. KINZINGER of Illinois. There has been a lot of talk lately about Afghanistan. You hear it every day. You heard it just a little bit ago about why are we in Afghanistan? What are we fighting for? Isn't it time to go home?

I've got to tell you the easy thing to do is to stand up and say let's just declare victory and let's leave, and then whatever happens after we're gone, that's not our fault anymore. It's not our problem. That's the easy thing to do.

You know, the America I grew up in and continue to grow in and live in is not the country that always picks the easy thing. The thing about the American DNA is, I believe we do typically the right thing.

Now, let me tell you, I'm still a pilot in the military. I still fly for the Air National Guard, and I've had the privilege and honor of serving overseas with my fellow men and women in uniform. Although most of my experience was in Iraq, I remember in Iraq a time when Members of this House stood up and said that the war in Iraq is lost, that there is no way to win, and it's time to just come home.

And we see today that now the American troops are coming home from Iraq but under a condition of victory. And while I have concerns about that timetable for withdrawal, I think anybody would agree that that's better than had we just in 2006 and 2007 folded up and taken the easy way.

So let me ask my fellow Members of Congress and let me ask the American people, what is it we're fighting for in Afghanistan?

I have here a very disturbing but a very appropriate picture of what it is that we're fighting for.

The young girl you see on the top, her name is BiBi. BiBi is 17 years old. When BiBi was 12 years old, she was sold to somebody basically as a slave as a result of a member of her family committing a crime and selling her as reparations for that crime. For 5 years she was beaten by her husband until one day she decided to run away to seek freedom.

Well, she was caught. Her husband caught her, drug her back to his house, and the Taliban, as a way to enact justice, forced him, with his brother holding her down, forced him to cut off her nose and to cut off her ears. She then proceeded to basically crawl to her uncle's house, and her uncle ignored her. And somebody finally called the hospital, and they said go to an American forward-operating base. They'll take care of you.

You hear the stories of the major who took care of her talking about how she showed up and talking about the fright that she had in her eyes.

I took a trip to Afghanistan recently and saw a village where I saw a man who was standing on a berm with an

AK-47. And I talked to him through a translator, and he informed me that not 2 days ago his daughter fell into a well and drowned. But yet he still believes that his village needs protecting. And he could be sitting at home mourning the loss of his daughter, and I'm sure he mourned the loss, but he was standing out defending his village because he wants what Americans want, what anybody around the world wants. They want security. They want to be able to raise their family. BiBi just wants to live her life without being beaten and sold into slavery.

Today, because of the American presence in Afghanistan and that of our coalition partners, you see the picture at the bottom of this, the best part of this picture, and that is girls in school learning to read and write, learning that there is a world out there, learning that despite where they were raised and born, they, too, can have some of the freedoms and some of the privileges that folks in the rest of the world and especially in the United States have.

So let me say this. It is so easy to stand up and say this is not worth it. But I'm going to tell you the second verse of the Star Spangled Banner has a line that says "Oh conquer we must, when our cause it is just."

Ladies and gentlemen, what we're doing in Afghanistan is not extending an empire. It's bringing freedom to millions of people, taking out jihadists that would kill people simply because you believe differently than them, and we are standing up for freedom around the globe. The greatest disinfectant to terrorism is freedom.

Ladies and gentlemen, the fight in Afghanistan, though difficult, is worth it, and I come in today and stand up and say "God bless you" to those that have gone over there and put on the uniform, and I say "thank you" for your service to your country. The fight is worth it.

#### TAKING CARE OF THOSE AT HOME

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. RANGEL) for 5 minutes.

Mr. RANGEL. I have been so moved by the preceding gentleman's remarks about the good work that Americans can do, especially when the argument is which side are we on, terrorism or freedom.

I don't know how many cases in the world that the United States of America can intercede in, but I do know that, as we see these horrible examples of what people can do to their own people, that we have thousands of Americans who have volunteered to support our flag and the integrity of the United States who have been killed. And it just seemed to me that when we're talking about the protection of a human body, whether it's losing a limb or your sight or your face, no matter what it is—and especially your life—that if America is going to take this