

Thank you, Mr./Madame Speaker.

I rise today to offer my strong support for H.R. 3548, the Unemployment Compensation Extension Act of 2009.

The unemployment rate in my state of Illinois is 10 percent. Illinois' unemployment rate is higher than the national average of 9.6 percent; and within Illinois, the rate in the Chicago area is higher still, at 10.6 percent.

It is true that there are signs the economy is beginning to recover: fewer jobs were lost in August than in previous months. But we still have a long way to go in terms of job creation, and in the meantime, we need to help those who are looking for work but can't find it.

Three hundred thousand Illinoisans have lost their jobs in the last year. Five million Americans have been out of work longer than six months. The bill before us would extend an additional 13 weeks of unemployment compensation for those individuals in high unemployment states who are exhausting their unemployment benefits. With nearly six people out of work for every available job, this assistance is imperative.

H.R. 3548 would help at least 20,000 Illinoisans who are exhausting their benefits by the end of September and more than 50,000 whose benefits would otherwise expire by the end of the year.

Extending unemployment compensation will help job-hunting Americans pay their bills and prevent more foreclosures, further bolstering the economy. According to Mark Zandi, chief economist of Moody's Economy.com, every \$1 spent on unemployment benefits generates \$1.63 in new economic demand.

I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 3548 and I yield back the balance of my time.

