

Unhappy Holidays?

The U.S. Department of Labor tracks long-term unemployment. They've been at it since 1948. In that entire time, we've never seen a stretch of high unemployment and long-term joblessness like the present. Congress has never cut off federally funded benefits – those that kick in when state benefits are exhausted – when unemployment was anywhere near this high. That is, until now.

At the moment, a number of obstructionists in Congress are putting this lifeline for jobless workers in jeopardy by holding it ransom for partisan priorities, like tax cuts for the wealthiest. It doesn't matter that the jobs simply aren't there – right now there are four job-seekers for every opening – or that when the new year arrives, nearly two million Americans will lose their federal benefits.

Losing benefits has very real consequences. It can mean the difference between just scraping by and falling into poverty, between living in a home and living in a car, between food on the table and going hungry. And, it's not just jobless workers who will fall further into economic despair if federal benefits evaporate. We can expect more foreclosures to impact the housing market, less money to bolster small businesses, and additional economic impacts that will directly or indirectly hurt us all.

It's time for Congress to act.

This Thursday in Washington, jobless workers and allies will hold a prayer vigil and then lobby Congress to extend critical federal unemployment benefits. Across the country, dozens more events and meetings will take place.

To find out if there is an event near you, visit:

www.AmericaWantsToWork.org

**Reminder! Registration is now open for the 2012 Regional Rapid Response Conferences!
Visit www.uswrr.org for details.**