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May 1, 2014

**Protect Job Seekers  
Restore the Federal Emergency Unemployment Insurance Program**

The Honorable John Boehner  
Speaker of the House  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Boehner:

On behalf of The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, we urge you to bring the Emergency Unemployment Compensation Extension Act of 2014 (H.R. 3979) to the floor. H.R. 3979 will provide for the retroactive restoration of the federal emergency unemployment insurance program (UI). H.R. 3979 will also provide much-needed economic support for millions of Americans still struggling to find their footing after years of recession and job losses. Retroactive restoration of the UI program will alleviate hardship for the most vulnerable job seekers while fostering economic growth for all.

The unemployment insurance program expired over three months ago, putting millions of vulnerable workers and families at risk. Long-term unemployment remains unacceptably high, and millions of Americans continue to work hard to find a job but have not succeeded. Every week that renewal of UI is delayed will deny assistance to another 72,000 people.<sup>1</sup> This vital economic lifeline helps struggling Americans feed and clothe their families while they look for new employment.

Unemployment insurance remains a crucial source of protection for unemployed jobseekers, keeps millions out of poverty, and spurs economic growth. In 2012, UI kept 2.5 million people, including 600,000 children, out of poverty.<sup>2</sup> In addition to providing an urgent safety net, UI provides a boost to the economy because the money is usually quickly spent by the long-term unemployed. Current estimates<sup>3</sup> show that the U.S. economy has lost \$4.7 billion in first three months of the year due to the December 28th expiration of the emergency unemployment insurance program.

The failure of Congress to restore unemployment benefits would be unparalleled in the history of federal responses to high unemployment following economic recessions. In the past, when long-term unemployment rates remained at levels similar to the current level (today at 38 percent), Congress has consistently acted in a bipartisan fashion to extend emergency unemployment benefits. It would be unprecedented for Congress to fail to extend unemployment insurance benefits under the current circumstances.

For these reasons, we urge you to support the retroactive reinstatement of unemployment insurance. It will help the most vulnerable Americans while also helping to sustain our



country's recovery. If you have any questions, please contact Lexer Quamie, Senior Counsel, at 202-466-3648 or [quamie@civilrights.org](mailto:quamie@civilrights.org). Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Wade Henderson  
President & CEO



Nancy Zirkin  
Executive Vice President

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<sup>1</sup> <http://democrats.waysandmeans.house.gov/thousands-are-losing-their-unemployment-insurance-everyday>

<sup>2</sup> <http://halfintn.org/blog/2014/01/27/take-action-urge-your-congress-member-to-renew-unemployment-insurance/>

<sup>3</sup> <http://democrats.waysandmeans.house.gov/thousands-are-losing-their-unemployment-insurance-everyday>