



NEWS RELEASE

July 15, 2010

Expiration of Long-Term Unemployment Insurance Leaves Racially-Disparate Void

As extension of Unemployment Insurance benefits languishes in Congress, and unemployed Americans face mounting financial problems, people of color are even harder-hit by the challenges.

While national unemployment hovers close to 10 percent, African American and Latino unemployment rates top 15 and 12 percent, respectively. Although these groups remain over-represented among both the unemployed and the long-term unemployed, they are at least 25 percent less likely than unemployed Whites to receive Unemployment benefits. A [report by The Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity](#) at The Ohio State University provides additional background information on these challenges.

A higher number of people of color are employed in categories ineligible for or inadequately covered by unemployment insurance, including low-wage, part-time, and seasonal jobs. Also contributing to these racial disparities are the large numbers of Blacks and Latinos who live in the least generous states for unemployment insurance.

Exacerbating this problem is the fact that many of these same people are least-able to weather the storm, often being totally without savings or already encumbered by significant debt.

The federal government has stepped up to buttress states' ability to support their residents in these trying times, but as Congress grapples with the expiration of long-term Unemployment Insurance benefits, the needs of those hit hardest should be kept in focus. In particular, the greater distress suffered by people of color underlines the critical importance of targeted reform as well as policies with broad impact within state and federal systems of unemployment insurance to meet the most critical needs of Americans in crisis, as well as those of all Americans.

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Interview Source:

[Andrew Grant-Thomas](#), deputy director of the Kirwan Institute, is available to discuss these issues further.

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