

Draft Senate Offer on UI-Related Provisions

February 8, 2012

This Senate offer on Unemployment Insurance (UI) provisions builds on proposals from the House, Senate and members of both parties in order to reach consensus on the remaining issues. Its components would reauthorize a maximum of 93 total weeks of UI benefits through the end of the year and promote innovative, new programs that give states flexibility in their efforts to help the unemployed return to work.

I. Continuation of Emergency UI benefits

Under this offer, total weeks of unemployment benefits, both State and Federal, would not exceed 93 weeks by the end of the year, compared to the 99 weeks available in some States now. This maximum level of weeks would be targeted to those states with higher levels of unemployment where the need for assistance remains greatest. This offer would continue Federal UI benefits through the end of the year and maintain the current phase-out rules for the Federal Benefits (the Emergency Unemployment Compensation program). The Senate is willing to discuss options for achieving this goal.

II. Requiring GED Enrollment or High School Completion to Collect Benefits

The Senate does not accept the House proposal requiring some Americans who lose their jobs to pursue a GED.

III. Allowing Drug Testing of UI Applicants

The Senate does not accept the House proposal requiring Americans who lose their jobs to submit to drug testing to receive benefits.

IV. Promoting State Innovation

The Senate does not accept the provision to allow States to divert UI funds through waivers in the House, but instead proposes a competitive grant program to promote innovative programs not funded by UI benefits dollars. This proposal will give states additional flexibility to implement UI-related reforms to help UI recipients return to work.