

# Committee on Ways and Means

## Extended Unemployment Benefits In “High Unemployment States” December 11, 2002

### Background

Through December 2002, unemployed workers in all States qualify for up to 13 weeks of 100% Federally-funded extended unemployment benefits under the March 2002 “Job Creation and Worker Assistance Act of 2002” (P.L. 107-147). Unemployed workers in certain “high unemployment States” may qualify for up to an additional 13 weeks of extended benefits. Already this year, workers in 13 States (AK, AR, CA, ID, MA, MI, NC, NV, NJ, OR, PA, WA, and WI) have accessed these “high unemployment State” extended benefits.

### Definition of “High Unemployment State”

Under both the March 2002 law and the upcoming House bill, the definition of “high unemployment State” for purposes of these 100% Federally-funded extended benefits temporarily means satisfying one of the following unemployment rate “triggers” based on the permanent law extended benefits (EB) program:

1. **4% IUR trigger** (temporarily reduced from 5%)
  - a. State has 4% or higher insured unemployment rate (IUR) for most recent 13 weeks, which is at least 120% of the level in the comparable period in both of the prior two years.
  - b. This replaces a 5% IUR and 120% rise trigger in the EB program.
  - c. *No States currently qualify under this trigger.*
  
2. **6% IUR trigger** (State option)
  - a. In most recent 13-week period (no rise compared to prior years required).
  - b. 41 States have opted for this trigger. States NOT opting for this trigger: DE, FL, GA, IA, KY, MA, NH, ND, SD, UT, WA, and WY.
  - c. Individuals in States that have not elected this option do not qualify, even if the State satisfies the “high unemployment” criteria.
  - d. *No States currently qualify under this trigger.*
  
3. **6.5% TUR trigger** (State option)
  - a. State has a 6.5% or higher 3-month average total unemployment rate (TUR), which is at least 110% of the level for a comparable period in either of the prior two years.
  - b. Nine States elected this option: AK, CT, KS, NH, NC, OR, RI, VT, WA.
  - c. Individuals in the remaining 44 States that have not elected this option do not qualify, even if the State satisfies the “high unemployment” criteria.
  - d. *AK, OR, and WA currently qualify under this trigger.*

Note: States include DC, PR, and USVI.