

## **Closing Statement of Representative Lloyd Doggett, Ranking Member of the Subcommittee for Human Resources**

### **Mark Up of Legislation to End This Year's Federal Guaranteed Unemployment Insurance Committee on Ways and Means**

Mr. Chairman, This amendment recognizes that our Republican colleagues are much better at naming bills than what they put in the bills. And so it leaves the name of the bill but it strikes the remainder. As such, it will do for creating jobs exactly what the bill as introduced does, which is absolutely nothing. But it will save substantial paper.

Mr. Chairman, this underlying bill is really the Big Shift Bill. It shifts from the Republican position in December, a position that I strongly opposed that in return for two years of tax relief for billionaires, the long term unemployed would receive relief for a year. And now after 5 months they've decided that we'll take care of the billionaires, but we don't care so much about the unemployed. It also has as its underlying theme, the shiftless unemployed. That we will shift this money that has been allocated to deal with the needs of the long term unemployed from the shiftless unemployed to the states who have failed to manage their own budgets and plan for the future that that's a better use of the money.

Well I think that in discussions above Democrats and Republicans today, I sometimes tend to gloss over when we talk about 4 million long term unemployed who are affected, when we talk about 31 billion dollars, again to get the number correct, of money. Let me talk about one individual who has been impacted by the long term, the extended unemployment benefits. And I set the stage for you not in Michigan or Ohio that have had such high unemployment, but in Austin, TX which is one of the best areas in the country. In fact, Austin was identified I think by one private source as the community that had come out of the recession the best of any place in the country and its unemployment rate last month was a little over 6%.

I'm speaking specifically of Anne. Anne is 57 years old. And until a short time ago she was the Vice President for Operations of an Austin company. It borrowed too much and when the economy tanked, her company tanked too. It closed its door and 88 people in the Austin area were without any job. She contacted our office to learn how she, what she could do about unemployment and we explained to her what the benefits were. She says the benefits kept my home together and kept me together. Without these benefits, a difficult situation would have become a disastrous situation. During the time that she has received extended unemployment benefits, Anne has applied, in one of the best economies in the country, for 118 jobs, including jobs in retail and other professions from that which she worked. She has gotten exactly 3 interviews out of those 118 job applications. Two of those, the employers told her she was over qualified and she has not been able to find other employment.

We are talking about real life human beings and the stories of these families. The extended unemployment benefits cannot take care of all their problems but we can help a little those Americans, who through no fault of their own, have found themselves in a desperate situation and there a number of those out there.

Now one aspect that has not been discussed about this bill today is what it does not do. We know it doesn't do anything about creating jobs but over the last 30 years we have had a bipartisan commitment to extend the federal unemployment tax act to assure that we have the monies to keep our unemployment system working. Next month, that act will expire. There will be no more monies coming from it. It is quite clear that our Republican colleagues in this bill and in none other don't plan to extend it.

Instead, their approach to federal unemployment insurance, as our Chairman has indicated, is essentially the same as the approach to Medicare, let it wither on the vine. Let the financial underpinnings of the employment system, which have been in place through Republican and Democratic administrations since 1976, let those expire. When you combine that with what they're doing in ending the guarantee with this opt out system, one can understand why our teachers, many of whom in a state with a cruel budget as Texas has, with schools closing and teachers being terminated will be facing the unemployment lines, wrote to the committee and I would ask to make it a part of the record, through the National Education Association, that this bill really poses a serious problem for those who are teachers, who have, will now see these unemployment benefits no longer available and that in a fragile economy, as several people have pointed out, we are also removing one of the most effective forms of stimulus.

For that reason, I urge adoption of the amendment to leave the name but strip the remainder.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WKK4vFcZJj8>