

Opening 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

Well indeed last December there was a great, if temporary, kumbaya moment between President Obama and the Republicans. The Republicans said give us our tax breaks for billionaires for another two years and we'll extend unemployment assistance to the most desperately unemployed for one year. And it's not five months later and they've decided they still want to help the billionaires but they're not so sure, maybe we'll have an opt out for helping the unemployed.

This really is a disappointing moment in the life of the Committee this year. We've had a completely bipartisan effort in our Subcommittee on Human Resources. Incorporated in this legislation are some of the bipartisan matters we've talked about like better data sharing. I personally have no objection to uniform work search requirements. But these bipartisan matters don't represent the thrust of this legislation. This is a bill that represents a surprise attack on the jobless by encouraging the states to terminate assistance to as many as 4 million long term unemployed Americans.

Last Thursday, the proposal on terminating extended employment insurance coverage was sprung on us, jumping out like a jack in the box. And at least Mr. Camp and Mr. Davis were candid that not only had our Subcommittee never explored this proposal, but they personally hadn't conceived of it until last week. This bill that had been described to us last Thursday is not the bill that they actually filed. The Manager's Amendment attempts to return to that proposal.

This is what appears to be a sudden, ideologically driven proposal to provide more federal money to the states, if they will accept it, combined with the feeling that really the problem is not unemployment but the unemployed. Like the rest of the Republican legislative agenda, this mislabeled jobs act does not create a single new job, it simply attempts to take from the jobless. We believe that a better approach would be a bipartisan effort aimed at job training, the very type of job training that the Republican proposal H.R. 1 sought to largely eliminate, and on modernizing our employment system, but not on one that takes from those who need the assistance the most.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZsPJETYMZb0>