

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

February 22, 2012

Senator Randy Richardville
Michigan State Senate
PO Box 30036
Lansing, MI 48909-7536

Senator Gretchen Whitmer
Michigan State Senate
PO Box 30036
Lansing, MI 48909-7536

Representative Jase Bolger
Michigan House of Representatives
PO Box 30014
Lansing, MI 48909-7514

Representative Richard E. Hammel
Michigan House of Representatives
PO Box 30014
Lansing, MI 48909-7514

Dear Senators Richardville and Whitmer and Representatives Bolger and Hammel:

Last year we expressed our deep concern that the Michigan Legislature passed and you passed legislation to cut the state unemployment insurance program from 26 to 20 weeks. We warned that this misguided action would result in a double benefit cut for unemployed workers in Michigan because the federal Emergency Unemployment Compensation (EUC) program is calculated based on a percentage of the underlying state benefits, and urged you to veto that legislation.

Unfortunately, the state cut from 26 to 20 weeks went into effect in January and is now negatively impacting Michiganders struggling to find work as our state recovers from the deepest economic recession and financial crisis in decades.

Now that a new framework for federal unemployment insurance has been put in place for the remainder of the year through the *Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act*, the misguided state action will result in Michigan unemployed workers losing access to more federal weeks than any state in the nation.

Because the structure within the federal unemployment program is based on the state program the misguided reduction of six weeks of state benefits will result in Michigan also giving up between 11 and 14 weeks of 100% federally funded benefits this year. As you know, already 47,000 individuals have filed initial state claims for unemployment insurance since the state cut in weeks went into effect. If those individuals need access to the Federal Emergency Unemployment Compensation (EUC) program, they will receive the reduced levels.

For example:

Total Weeks of unemployment benefits available to Michigan Workers under *Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act*

Individual Receiving

26 weeks

Of State Benefits

89 weeks

79 weeks

73 weeks

We are pleased that through the Conference Committee, Democrats were able to reject the proposal by House Republicans that would have resulted in Michigan's unemployed workers receiving only 46 weeks of unemployment insurance for the entire year. But the fact remains that the state law causes a very negative result for Michigan's unemployed workers that can very easily be reversed by State action.

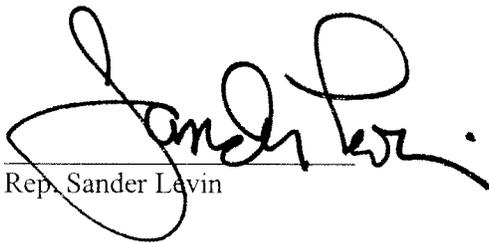
We have confirmed with the U.S. Department of Labor that should Michigan act to change their state law, the federal weeks would be restored going forward for those individuals who receive 26 weeks.

Our state economy is turning the corner, our auto companies are posting profits and producing the best cars in the world and other sectors are growing and new ones are emerging, but the bottom line remains that individuals, families and communities are still struggling. Nearly 450,000 Michigan workers remain unemployed and research indicates that in the Midwest there are still four individuals looking for every job opening.

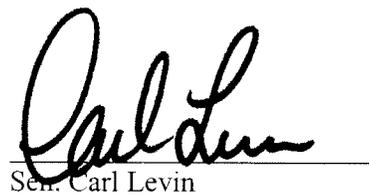
With the simple action of restoring the state unemployment program to 26 weeks - the place it was since its inception - you can allow Michigan's unemployed workers - actively seeking work - to access 100% federally funded unemployment insurance should they need it going forward.

We urge you to act immediately.

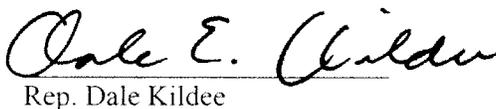
Sincerely,



Rep. Sander Levin



Sen. Carl Levin



Rep. Dale Kildee



Rep. Gary Peters



Rep. John Dingell



Rep. John Conyers

Debbie Stabenow

Sen. Debbie Stabenow

Hansen Clarke

Rep. Hansen Clarke