

**Washington, DC** – Today, the House of Representatives passed, by a vote of 331-83, the [Emergency Unemployment Compensation Extension Act of 2009 \(HR 3404\)](#)

, which would extend the unemployment benefits in states hit hardest by job losses.

**Congressman Charlie Gonzalez (TX-20)**

issued the following statement on the passage of this legislation.

“American workers are suffering through the worst downturn in years. Qualified, talented, hard-working men and women, people who never took a day-off in their lives, can’t find jobs no matter where they look. Helping them out isn’t just the right thing to do, though; it will also help our economy to recover by pumping this money into businesses across the country. While Texas has so far weathered this storm better than most, the interconnectedness of our national economy means that improvements in other states will spur our growth as well.”

The provisions of HR 3404 would extend unemployment benefits for thirteen additional weeks to the residents of states where unemployment has exceeded 8.5%. With CNN reporting [“more than six potential workers for each opening](#)

”, government calculations estimate that more than one million people’s benefits would expire in the final quarter of 2009 without this extension. Unemployment in Texas is at roughly 8.0%, below

[the national rate of 9.7%](#)

, but has been trending sharply upward in recent months according to [the Bureau of Labor Statistics](#)

even as

[some states have begun to see declines](#)

, and Texans would become eligible for the additional 13-weeks of unemployment insurance if that rate should surpass 8.5% before the end of 2010.

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