



STATE OF CONNECTICUT  
EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS

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GOVERNOR

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## **Governor Rell: Swift Action Needed to Prevent Cutoff of Extended Benefits for Unemployed**

With just a few weeks remaining before Congress recesses for its Christmas break, Governor M. Jodi Rell is urging the state's Congressional delegation to continue to push for changes in the federal stimulus law ensuring that the full 14 weeks of extended unemployment benefits will be available to the jobless in Connecticut.

"Time is running out and Congress must act," Governor Rell said. "Connecticut residents who are looking for work need to be able to provide for their families and cannot afford to have gaps in their coverage. A delay would be inexcusable and disastrous for those living on the edge right now."

President Obama signed into law in early November a bill that would extend full federal funding of unemployment benefits for 14 weeks for Connecticut and all other states. However, states are not able to provide the full amount of benefits authorized by the bill because the underlying law – the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) – is set to expire on December 31, 2009.

Governor Rell said several other important provisions will be threatened by failure to reauthorize ARRA by the end of December, including eligibility for a nine-month, 65-percent COBRA subsidy; an increase of \$25 per check on new entitlements to state and federal unemployment benefits; and the suspension of the federal income tax on an individual's first \$2400 in unemployment benefits in 2010.

Governor Rell is urging Congress to reauthorize these provisions before the end of the year. She recently wrote to the state delegation to encourage expanding the ARRA provisions that provide full federal funding of extended jobless benefits for an additional year.

She also advocated for an additional year of interest-free advances for state unemployment insurance trust funds and a temporary modification of the Federal

Unemployment Tax Act (FUTA) to stipulate that employers begin to pay increased FUTA taxes in states that have federal loans outstanding for three years rather than two.

In addition, she encouraged the delegation and Congress to direct stimulus funding to state governments so that unemployment compensation funds may be replenished, removing the threat of any additional financial burdens on employers.