



1421 LONGWORTH BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
202-225-5261
202-225-3719 FAX

COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS
DEFENSE SUBCOMMITTEE
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DEVELOPMENT SUBCOMMITTEE

TIM RYAN
CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES
13TH DISTRICT, OHIO
December 7, 2015

COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET

Chairman Bob Hackett
Insurance Committee
Ohio House of Representatives
77 South High Street
Columbus, OH 43215

Ranking Member Heather Bishoff
Insurance Committee
Ohio House of Representatives
77 South High Street
Columbus, OH 43215

Dear Chairman Hackett and Ranking Member Bishoff:

I am writing to urge the Ohio legislature to reconsider its attempt to limit unemployment benefits, a lifeline for Ohio workers who face temporary uncertainties in employment. Ohio House Bill 394 will have an upsetting impact on thousands of workers and members of their families at a time when they need help the most.

Like many of you and your colleagues, I have strived to improve Ohio's economy and defend those programs that help people transitioning from one job to the next. For example, I have worked closely with my Republican and Democratic colleagues to help grow and expand the energy sector in Ohio by promoting domestic oil production, by increasing oil exports, and by strengthening our natural gas and natural gas-powered vehicles industries. But after years of strong employment gains that outpaced private sector growth, we are now seeing a softening in the oil and gas sector, along with steel and manufacturing, due to extremely low oil prices. Unfortunately, this decrease in revenue is leading to layoffs and unemployment.

It is critical that we maintain a robust safety net for individuals who have lost their jobs through no fault of their own. Furthermore, keeping unemployment benefits steady will mitigate the indirect effects of a downturn by keeping more money in the pockets of consumers most likely to spend it. A Labor Department study during the Presidency of George W. Bush showed that for every dollar spent on unemployment benefits, two dollars were invested back into the economy. Unemployment benefits will not only help people who need them, but will also increase economic activity in the State of Ohio.

As the Ohio Legislature works to reform the unemployment trust fund, I urge you and your colleagues to make sure this isn't done on the backs of Ohio's workers. I will continue to speak out to ensure that they are not gutted by reductions and restrictions. Please don't hesitate to contact me if there is any way I can assist.

Sincerely,

Tim Ryan
Member of Congress

197 WEST MARKET STREET
WARREN, OH 44481
330-373-0074
330-373-0098 FAX

241 FEDERAL PLAZA WEST
YOUNGSTOWN, OH 44503
330-740-0193
330-740-0182 FAX

1030 EAST TALLMADGE AVENUE
AKRON, OH 44310
330-630-7311
330-630-7314 FAX

TOLL-FREE: 1-800-856-4152
WWW.HOUSE.GOV/TIMRYAN