

An Update from Half in Ten

Dear Elaine,

Before Congress closed what may be the first of two lame duck sessions before the end of the year, they passed, and President Bush signed, an important and [much needed extension](#) of unemployment insurance benefits. But they did not take other urgently needed action to help hard pressed families make ends meet, or get the economy back on track.

Last week, we released a [report](#) (cited in a [New York Times article](#) this weekend) along with our allies at the National Employment Law Project pointing out how important it was that Congress extend unemployment insurance benefits to help keep more families from falling into poverty, and arguing that they needed to pass the [Unemployment Insurance Modernization Act](#) to make sure more people are able to collect unemployment insurance. Today, only 37% of unemployed workers get unemployment insurance, and low wage workers are twice as likely as higher wage workers to find themselves unemployed, but only one third as likely to collect unemployment benefits. The UIMA would help change this. Along with the report, we held a forum including [testimony](#) from unemployed Virginia resident Paula Stein, Maine Labor Commissioner Laura Fortman, New York Deputy Commissioner of Labor for Employment Security Nancy Dunphy, and National Employment Law Project Policy Director Maurice Emsellem.

We look forward to working with you over the next few weeks to let Congress know how important it is that they act quickly on a recovery package that rebuilds our economy from the bottom up and helps those hardest hit by these difficult times.

Don't forget to sign our [petition](#) calling for a national commitment to cut poverty in half in ten years, and to ask your family, friends, and coworkers to sign as well.

Thanks for all your support!

The Half in Ten Team