



Shaping Policy...  
Creating Opportunities

*For more information contact:  
Amy Blouin, Executive Director: 314-518-8867  
Heather Lasher Todd, Communications Director: 314-348-1742*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**June 11, 2008**

## **62,000 MISSOURIANS FACE END OF UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS AS STATE CONTINUES TO LOSE JOBS**

*Congress is now considering much-needed measure to extend unemployment insurance*

St. Louis, MO – The most recent employment figures from the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics indicate that the U.S. has lost 324,000 jobs in the last five months. Missouri alone lost 21,362 jobs during that same period.

An increasing number of unemployed workers are also facing unemployment that lasts longer than six months, and are therefore exhausting their allotted unemployment benefits. More than 62,000 workers and their families in Missouri alone already have, or soon will, exhaust their 26 weeks of unemployment benefits. At the same time, families are facing rising gas and food prices, making it even more difficult for unemployed families to make ends meet.

As a result of the dramatic decline in employment, the U.S. Congress is now considering a *temporary* extension of Unemployment Insurance Benefits to add an additional 13 weeks to the current maximum of 26 weeks. In previous times of economic distress, Congress has passed extensions to help families through the economic decline - most recently a similar temporary extension was passed in 2002.

“As unemployment grows and jobs become harder to find, passage of the temporary extension of Unemployment Insurance Benefits is a critical and proven tool in assisting the 62,000 Missourians who either have lost, or are about to lose, their unemployment benefits,” said Amy Blouin, Executive Director of the Missouri Budget Project. “Missouri Senators Bond and McCaskill should support bi-partisan federal legislation to temporarily extend unemployment benefits, which would provide vital assistance for Missourians during these difficult economic times.”

The cost for extension of the Unemployment Insurance Benefits would be paid from the Federal Unemployment Trust Fund, which currently has \$35 billion in reserves, and would therefore not reduce available federal funds for other priorities. The U.S. Congressional Budget Office has stated that extending benefits in this manner is one of the most cost-effective and fastest-acting forms of economic stimulus.

- 30 -

*The Mission of the Missouri Budget Project is: To advance public policies that improve economic opportunities for all Missourians – particularly low and middle-income families – by providing reliable and objective research, public education and advocacy. More information is available at [www.mobudget.org](http://www.mobudget.org).*