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# Congress of the United States

## House of Representatives

October 24, 2003

The Honorable J. Dennis Hastert  
Speaker  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Speaker,

The state of Oregon has the dubious distinction of leading the nation in unemployment with 8% of its workforce currently jobless. No area in Oregon is suffering more than the congressional district that I represent. Thirteen of the twenty counties I represent have unemployment rates higher than the national average of 6.1% and some are struggling with double-digit rates. These statistics are more than just numbers; they represent real people who are trying to make ends meet.

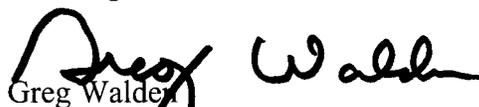
As you know, under current law, unemployment benefits will expire on December 31, 2003. As such, I urge you to help ensure that the House has an opportunity to extend unemployment benefits before we adjourn for the year. To achieve this, I respectfully direct your attention to HR 3270, the Workers Assistance Extension Act of 2003, which would provide dislocated workers with a 13-week extension of federal benefits once they exhaust their state benefits.

Mr. Speaker, Oregonians don't want handouts but they do want to get back to work. However, as our nation's economy reawakens from the uncertainty following the terrorist attacks there remain unemployed individuals who have lost their jobs through no fault of their own. During times like these, unemployment benefits are an indispensable safety net that allows dislocated workers to support their families.

Under your steady leadership and that of the Administration's, I am optimistic that our nation's economy will continue to rebound and employment opportunities will expand. However, in the meantime, it is critical to assist those that the economic recovery has yet to reach.

Thank you for considering this request and for your outstanding leadership of the House.

Best Regards,

  
Greg Walden  
Member of Congress

GREG WALDEN  
2D DISTRICT, OREGON  
**DEPUTY MAJORITY WHIP**

WASHINGTON, DC OFFICE:  
1404 LONGWORTH HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-3702  
TELEPHONE: (202) 225-6730

DISTRICT OFFICES:  
843 EAST MAIN STREET  
SUITE 400  
MEDFORD, OR 97504  
TELEPHONE: (541) 776-4646  
TOLL FREE: (800) 533-3303

JAMISON BUILDING  
SUITE 211  
131 NW HAWTHORNE STREET  
BEND, OR 97701  
TELEPHONE: (541) 389-4408

WEBSITE:  
<http://walden.house.gov>

E-MAIL:  
<http://walden.house.gov/contactgreg>