

Within the realm of the complicated struggle between the unemployed in America and the people's government, lays in the shadows an unspoken dilemma. There is a very large group of people who were laid off due to no fault of their own, who spent every day trying to get a job in the field they worked in.

After months of no luck and when the reality finally set in that there were no jobs to get, these go getters went to plan B and went back to school. All these people realized that they had to retrain for a new field and for a new century or global economy. Whether it was green jobs or some other field of work, millions of these people went back to school and tried to retrain for a new world. Some went to trade schools and some went to college.

This group was not the lazy ones like some mistakenly say or the group that just gave up on everything. I'm writing about the group of people who are trying to do the right thing and retrain for this new economy. All of these countless people are at the mercy of unemployment benefits. The absolute "only" way it is possible for these people to go to school and retrain, are these unemployment checks. It is their only way to pay their bills while they go to school fulltime. This group who is not sitting on their hands and are doing the right thing, are living under the biggest blanket of unimaginable stress waiting for their benefits to end before they are done with school.

While government can not get their act together and address this as a long term problem, all these people wake up every day wondering whether they will be cut off, before they get their degrees. This would leave them with no job, no way to pay their bills and an unfinished education that will be rendered worthless. How can we have a country not do everything it can to support this group of people?

The employment system was created long ago and is outdated to address the new realities of the 21st century in a jobless recession. This piecemeal way of dealing with unemployment from congress has not only caused stress for these families, but has turned upside down all fifty states' unemployment offices. They can't function day to day not knowing what direction congress is headed each morning.

Congress waits until the last minutes to extended benefits and the unemployment offices have already wasted millions of dollars on letters, postage and manpower sending out notices that are rendered irrelevant by the time it gets to people's mailboxes. The whole approach has been an unmitigated disaster. Our government needs to support these people going to school or our place in the world this century will be destroyed in the global market.

Congress must state and make law, that anyone enrolled in school will get their unemployment benefits as long as they are in school and maintaining the proper grades to finish. How can we as a country expect to maintain our workforce, if we can not even support this group of people? This group should never be cut off from unemployment. They need to concentrate on their studies and not the stress of wondering whether their government will abandon them.

These are grown adults, who in most cases haven't been to school in decades and are trying everything to survive. This comes down to a moral statement of who we are as a nation. We must protect the people doing the right thing and keep them on unemployment while they retrain. It makes economic sense and it would be national suicide to abandon these Americans.

I want everyone who reads this article to take a few minutes, print this out and get a stamp and mail it. Mail it to every member of congress. Something has to be done here and the health of our union is at stake. Please mail this to congress immediately and help bring about change that lifts us up as a nation. We can not put this group of people on the streets. Congress can no longer treat unemployment as a short term problem.

What will this nation look like if we abandon these people fighting for survival? What kind of country are we? We are at the crossroads and we need to answer that question. Who are we as a nation?

C. Rich