

# Governor Markell Presses for Extension of Lapsed Federal Unemployment Assistance

*3,500 Delawareans already cut off from vital lifeline because of Congressional inaction*

**Wilmington, DE** – Governor Markell today urged Congress to restore emergency unemployment assistance for thousands of Delawareans looking for work. Pointing to the economic benefits of the program and the impact on individuals and families hit hardest by the national economic downturn, Markell joined fellow Democratic Governors in writing to Congressional leaders to advocate an extension of Emergency Unemployment Compensation. (Text of the letter follows.)

“While we have seen positive signs in our economic recovery, now is not the time to cut off thousands of Delawareans and their families from a vital lifeline as they are trying to get back to work,” said Markell. “Not only is this support critical for vulnerable members of our communities, but eliminating that support will be a drag on the economy – recipients of benefits use that money for day-to-day purchases of goods and services in their communities. I thank the members of our Congressional delegation for their support of an extension and hope that yesterday’s bipartisan Senate vote to overcome of filibuster is a sign that Congress will quickly work to restore this assistance.”

When Congress failed to extend the assistance on December 28, approximately 3,500 Delawareans lost their benefits. [An average of more than 180 Delawareans per week](#) are expected to have their state assistance expire during the first half of 2014. Emergency federal assistance has traditionally been enacted during economic downturns, when state budgets are

especially tight.

If Congress passes an extension, unemployed workers could receive up to a total of 54 weeks of assistance. By law, that number would be a reduction from the 63 week limit from last year because the state's unemployment rate dropped from 7.3 percent to 6.5 percent over the past two months.

Without an extension of the emergency assistance, unemployed workers are only able to receive benefits for 26 weeks, paid for by the state.

[\*\*READ TEXT OF LETTER FROM DEMOCRATIC GOVERNORS\*\*](#)