Support the Getting Americans Back to Work Act, H.R. 6805

On behalf of our activist community, I urge you to contact your representative and ask him or her to support the Getting Americans Back to Work Act, H.R. 6805. Introduced by Reps. Ted Budd (R-N.C.) and Ken Buck (R-Colo.), the Getting Americans Back to Work Act would fix a glaring error in the CARES Act that could create a shortage of workers as states begin to reopen their economies.

Section 2104 of the CARES Act provides an additional $600 per week payment for those who have filed for and are receiving unemployment benefits. The additional payment is available for four months and comes on top of what the claimant receives through his or her state. Although enhanced unemployment benefits in the midst of this crisis may be necessary, the size of the subsidy, if it’s greater than the claimant’s previous wages, brings problems.

Congress has created an incentive for those who can work to stay on unemployment rather than seek a job as the economy begins to recover. In many instances, a worker can earn more on unemployment because of the additional benefits in the CARES Act than in a job. This problem has already been reported by some media outlets, such as Politico and CNBC.

Sen. Ben Sasse (R-Neb.) raised this point ahead of the vote on the CARES Act and offered to address the problem. Sasse, along with several of his colleagues, proposed an amendment to address the issue, but the amendment failed.

“Nobody has a problem with the generous unemployment benefits that are in this bill. Nobody has a problem with the generous unemployment insurance benefits that are in this bill. They should be generous amid the national crisis we are in,” Sasse said. “But we don’t want this piece of the bill to create an incentive for folks to stop working and to have their employers push them away when the employer and employee should be trying to rally around and together to help us build through this crisis.”
The Getting Americans Back to Work Act would address this problem by capping the amount an individual may receive from unemployment insurance at 100 percent of his or her previous wage. This eliminates the incentive to continue to not work as states begin to reopen their economies, because compensation from unemployment would not exceed compensation from employment.

Clearly, many Americans are struggling because of the partial economic shutdowns across our nation in response to COVID-19. If Congress fails to correct this error in the CARES Act, it could seriously hamper the economic recovery. As states begin to reopen and businesses begin to pick up the pieces, America will need more workers to fill jobs that will be available as the economy begins to recover. The Getting Americans Back to Work Act would address this issue while still ensuring that Americans who are on unemployment insurance don’t lose income.

For these reasons, I urge you to contact your representative and ask him or her to support the Getting Americans Back to Work Act, H.R. 6805.

Sincerely,

Adam Brandon
President, FreedomWorks