

Washington, D.C. – With legislation to cut payroll taxes and continue extended unemployment benefits stalled in the Senate, Representative David Price (NC-04) today called on Republicans to come to the negotiating table to reach an agreement that both houses of Congress can pass before Christmas.

The House-passed GOP plan would continue unemployment benefits in the short term, but phase them out for the long-term unemployed by reducing the maximum number of federally-funded weeks of unemployment insurance from 73 to 33 in many states. According to estimates prepared by members of the House Ways and Means Committee, the GOP plan would reduce benefits for 180,000 North Carolina residents. Across the country, this change would result in a reduction in benefits for more than 3.3 million Americans in 2012, and a complete loss of benefits for 940,000.

"Many of my Republican colleagues have advanced the notion that cutting unemployment benefits will actually help the economy because unemployed people prefer collecting unemployment insurance over working. That is a fantasy," Rep. Price said. "We should have a safety net that helps people who lose jobs through no fault of their own. Slashing unemployment benefits while North Carolinians are still struggling isn't consistent with our values as Americans."

The Republican plan's payroll tax cut would be paid for by freezing the salaries of federal workers until 2014, raising Medicare premiums, and cutting health insurance reform programs. The American Federation of Federal Government Employees estimates that the federal worker pay freeze would pull \$60 billion in wages out of the economy over two-years. As the home of both the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences and the largest EPA facility outside of Washington, D.C., the Fourth District has thousands of federal workers.

"The GOP has spent enough time taking pot shots at working people and the economy," Rep. Price said. "Now is not the time to be pulling money out of the economy. They need to come to the negotiating table and do what's right instead of attacking the very benefits that help unemployed Americans get back on their feet."

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