

Washington, D.C. – Today, Rep. David Price (NC-04) urged the Republican leadership of the North Carolina General Assembly to reconsider a fast-moving legislative proposal to deny Medicaid coverage to thousands of North Carolinians. In a letter delivered to legislative leaders over the weekend, Rep. Price (NC-04) also asked the leaders to not to make a proposed change to the state's unemployment insurance program that would effectively deny 80,000 North Carolina residents federally-funded unemployment benefits and therefore pull hundreds of million dollars out of the state's economy.

"Abdicating our commitments to the unemployed, undermining the expansion of health care for working families, this is no way to run a state," Rep. Price said. "Republicans in the General Assembly should reconsider these misguided efforts. Even if Raleigh Republicans are willing to walk away from our commitments to people who have lost jobs through no fault of their own, or people who need access to medical care, preventing nearly \$650 million from being spent in North Carolina stores and small businesses is going to hurt everyone."

Earlier today, Republican Governor John Kasich of Ohio announced that his state would expand Medicaid, extending coverage to 366,000 residents. Kasich, an opponent of the health care reform law, has said of the Medicaid expansion, ". . . this is a different issue. This is about people who are at the lower economic end."

In the letter to General Assembly leaders on their plan to undermine the federal unemployment insurance extension, Rep. Price wrote:

"Now is not the time to abandon tens of thousands of North Carolinians who have lost their jobs through no fault of their own and who stand to benefit from federal policy if their state government does not stand in the way. Nor can our state, with an unemployment rate of 9.2 percent, afford to remove the projected \$650 million in economic activity that would result from these benefits this year. I urge you to consider these grave consequences as you plot the course of House Bill 4."

The bipartisan American Taxpayer Relief Act of 2012, which passed with the support of 85 U.S. House Republicans and 89 Senators, extends the authorization for the federal Emergency Unemployment Compensation program through January 1, 2014. To remain eligible for federal assistance, states are not permitted to decrease the weekly benefit amount available through

their own unemployment compensation programs, and the reductions contained in the Republican bill being fast-tracked in the General Assembly bill would violate this provision. Rep. Price said the proposed policy change puts state and federal policy on a "collision course."

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