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COMMITTEE ON
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SUBCOMMITTEE ON HEALTH

SUBCOMMITTEE ON
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Congress of the United States
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July 11, 2011

Senate Majority Leader Scott Fitzgerald
Senate Minority Leader Mark Miller
Assembly Speaker Jeff Fitzgerald
Assembly Majority Leader Scott Suder
Assembly Minority Leader Peter Barca

Wisconsin State Capitol
P.O. Box 7882
Madison, WI 53707-7882

Dear Wisconsin Legislators:

In December 2010, Congress and President Obama acted to extend federal unemployment benefits for the long-term unemployed in states hit hard by the recession. Wisconsin can qualify for the extended federal benefits, but only after the legislature makes a corresponding change to state law.

Seven months later, our state continues to leave \$89 million in federal benefits on the table. This money should be going to Wisconsinites struggling to find a job, who in turn would provide a boost to our economy by paying their bills, providing food for their families, avoiding foreclosure, and making purchases at local businesses. The benefits for Wisconsin families and businesses far outweigh the minimal administrative cost to the state. The Wisconsin Unemployment Insurance Advisory Council agrees. On June 23, the Council voted unanimously to recommend the legislative fix to qualify for extended federal benefits.

Regardless of your views on unemployment insurance, failing to make the legislative adjustments to qualify for extended benefits is a bad deal for Wisconsinites. Our large and small businesses alike are already paying a federal payroll tax that helps fund unemployment benefits throughout the nation. However, as it currently stands, Wisconsin employers are contributing to extended unemployment benefits for Alabamans, New Yorkers, and Californians while Wisconsinites are being left behind. This is not fair for the people of our state, especially given the difficult economy. For many Wisconsinites, the small payments provided by unemployment benefits make a significant difference in their daily lives.

The over 225,000 Wisconsinites looking for work continue to face a challenging job market. Data from the U.S. Department of Labor shows that there are over four unemployed Americans for every job opening. Recent stories illustrate that this nationwide trend extends right into our

own backyards. In Oshkosh, 2,500 job-seekers attended a job fair with only 750 openings. Hundreds of out-of-work Wisconsinites traveled to Brodhead to apply in person for select jobs at a local factory. And in Madison, 5,000 people applied for roughly 100 full-time jobs at a new grocery store. Wisconsinites are struggling and are waiting for the state legislature to act.

Extending federal unemployment assistance to struggling families is both a moral imperative and a wise financial decision for Wisconsin. In April, 10,000 Wisconsinites lost their benefits due to legislative inaction, and hundreds more are affected each week. I urge you to make the legislative fix to qualify for extended federal benefits as soon as you return to session.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tammy Baldwin". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Tammy Baldwin
Member of Congress
Wisconsin's 2nd Congressional District

CC: Members of the Wisconsin State Legislature
CC: Governor Scott Walker