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Where States Are and Where They Should Be on Unemployment Protections

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This document summarizes the 2016 CAP, GCPI, and NELP report "Strengthening Unemployment Protections in America."

Unemployment insurance, or UI, has been a bedrock of the nation's social insurance system for eight decades. It is an essential ingredient for economic security, shared prosperity, and a stable economy. A partnership between states and the federal government, UI provides critical support for involuntarily unemployed jobseekers and their families by replacing a share of lost wages while workers search for a new job.[1]

UI also helps stabilize the economy during downturns by boosting the spending power of struggling families and creating demand in the local and national economies. It is a powerful tool for economic stimulus: Every $1 spent on UI benefits generates as much as $2 in additional economic activity.[2] From 2008 to 2010, UI closed more than 18 percent of the shortfall in gross domestic product, or GDP.[3] In 2009 alone, UI kept more than 5 million Americans out of poverty[4] and saved more than 2 million jobs by boosting demand in a sagging economy.[5] Finally, UI prevented 1.4 million home foreclosures between 2008 and 2012, with significantly lower default rates in states where UI benefits were larger.[6]

As important as UI has proven to be in the past, however, the system has not kept pace with changes in the labor force or the economy over the past several decades. As a result, many states' UI programs are underprepared for the next recession—which, while unpredictable, is inevitable: The U.S. economy has never gone longer than a decade without a downturn, and the nation is in its seventh year of expansion. Absent efforts to modernize the system and bring it into the 21st century, UI's effectiveness in protecting workers and the economy will continue to decline with enormous consequences for both working- and middle-class security and economic growth.

This issue brief identifies the main challenges facing states' UI programs; provides recent state-level data on UI eligibility rules, recipiency rates, benefit adequacy, and program solvency; and recommends steps that states can take to substantially strengthen their UI programs. In addition, the Appendix provides new analysis comparing the characteristics of each state's UI recipients with its broader population of unemployed workers, showing which groups of jobseekers state programs have underserved in recent years. The recommendations provided in this brief are based on a new comprehensive proposal to modernize UI, "Strengthening Unemployment Protections in America," developed by the Center for American Progress, or CAP; the Georgetown Center on Poverty and Inequality, or GCPI; and the National Employment Law Project, or NELP.[7]

States have tremendous flexibility over changes to their UI programs, particularly in the areas of program eligibility, benefit adequacy, and financing. The CAP, GCPI, and NELP report calls on the federal government to play a broader, more assertive role—both in setting stronger minimum standards and in providing more resources to states—but states need not wait for congressional action to enact key reforms to UI. The recommendations below would dramatically improve states' UI protections, significantly increasing economic security for working families, boosting labor force participation, and protecting states' economies against the next recession.

Key challenges facing the unemployment insurance system

1. Technology and globalization mean that many jobs lost in recent years are not returning and that workers need to retrain for employment in a different sector. Yet too few unemployed workers have access to tools for successful re-employment, first employment, and/or training.

2. Changes in the American workforce in the past 80 years mean that workers are more vulnerable than ever to involuntary unemployment. Yet UI's reach has been undermined by policy choices that severely restrict the number of unemployed workers it reaches. As a consequence, in 2015, only about one in four unemployed workers received UI—a historic low.[8] And in 13 states, fewer than 20 percent of unemployed workers were protected by UI, as Table 2 shows.[9] Low and shrinking eligibility has disproportionate effects on women, younger workers, workers of color, and those with alternative work arrangements.

3. Since UI was first enacted, recoveries from recessions have become slower and increasingly jobless. At the same time, UI's capacity as an automatic macroeconomic stabilizer has been steadily undermined by policy decisions, including states making deep cuts to benefit eligibility and adequacy while neglecting necessary improvements to financing. As of 2015, for example, fewer than one in three states had even the minimally adequate level of reserves in their UI trust funds.[10] As a result, the UI system is unprepared for the next recession.

Modernizing states' unemployment insurance programs

The new proposal from CAP, GCPI, and NELP develops recommendations for Congress and state governments that would substantially strengthen and modernize the UI system. When enacted, these reforms would protect more working families from the risk and hardships of unemployment by ensuring a robust employment, training, and income-security system for involuntarily unemployed workers. In addition, these reforms would prepare and protect state and national economies against future recessions.

The report calls for new federal standards for the UI system and proposes significant increases in federal funding to states—including for expanded re-employment services, information technology infrastructure upgrades, and program administration—to help achieve these standards. The proposal would lessen the fiscal pressure states face during recessions by providing full federal funding for an improved Extended Benefits program, as well as for at least one year of work sharing benefits in states where unemployment is high or rising rapidly. It would also offer incentive funding to states that extend their maximum UI duration beyond 26 weeks and reward states that meet new trust fund solvency targets.

However, states need not wait for Congress to act: The report also proposes many reforms that states can undertake starting today to significantly strengthen their UI programs. The remainder of this issue brief summarizes top recommendations for state action, the vast majority of which are already in place in at least one state today. State progress on select recommendations is shown in Table 1. Several reforms—including broadening the reach of re-employment services, as well as cracking down on worker misclassification and the employer tax evasion tactic known as SUTA dumping—can be immediately undertaken by state governors, while other must be enacted through legislation.[11] Greater detail on each of the recommendations can be found in the full CAP, GCPI, and NELP report, "Strengthening Unemployment Protections in America."

1. Ensure that more unemployed workers have access to re-employment assistance and training and reduce layoffs

CAP, GCPI, and NELP's proposal introduces new ideas to support worker training and upskilling, encourage entrepreneurship, and increase geographic labor mobility, as well as help more workers stay in the jobs they already have. The proposal would significantly increase federal resources to help states fund many of the reforms below, including more than $2.3 billion for the workforce system's effective re-employment programs and services for UI claimants and other jobseekers, as well as one-time funds for states to establish work sharing and Self-Employment Assistance programs.

Strengthen re-employment services

- **Increase the use and improve the targeting of re-employment services:** Intensive, staff-assisted re-employment services—including comprehensive assessments, individual job search plans, and career counseling—have been shown to be effective at helping unemployed workers return to work. State governors can use their executive authority to immediately provide these services to at least half of UI claimants who are not likely to return to their former employer or industry.[12] They can also take advantage of federal resources to update the statistical models used to identify workers who would most benefit from re-employment services and use these models to prioritize service delivery.[13]

- **Provide additional support to workers who are reskilling:** States should provide qualifying workers with up to 26 weeks of additional UI benefits while they are participating in state-approved education or training full time.

Reduce layoffs by implementing effective job-retention measures

- **Increase the use of work sharing:** Work sharing programs—also known as short-time compensation programs—provide an alternative to layoffs by giving employers the option to reduce work hours for all or some employees, who then receive partial UI benefits to replace part of the lost income.[14] Work sharing programs should be established in the minority of states where they are not currently in place.[15] All states should seek to maximize employer participation by providing administrative flexibility, permitting employers who have laid off greater numbers of people to participate, automating the processing of employer plans and claims filing, and conducting meaningful employer outreach.[16]

- **Encourage entrepreneurship through Self-Employment Assistance programs:** Self-Employment Assistance, or SEA, programs assist UI claimants in starting small businesses by providing entrepreneurship training and other resources and waiving UI's typical work-search requirements so that participants can build their businesses on a full-time basis.[17] SEA programs should be created in the District of Columbia and the 44 states where no active program is operating,[18] and all state SEA programs should connect participants with local Small Business Development Centers.

- **Improve experience rating:** Experience rating is the practice of adjusting an individual firm's tax rate according to its historical behavior—its experience—with layoffs so that it absorbs some of the costs of these layoffs, which otherwise fall on workers, taxpayers, and the economy.[19] States should bring their methods for experience rating in line with best practices and should deter layoffs by gradually raising their lowest maximum experience-rated tax rate—which can be as little as 5.4 percent under current law[20]—to at least 7 percent.

2. Provide more Americans with enhanced protection against the shock of unemployment

CAP, GCPI, and NELP's proposal lays out how states can update their UI eligibility criteria to reflect their modern labor forces—including expanding coverage to underserved groups such as women, workers of color, and low-paid workers. The tables in the Appendix compare the characteristics of all of states' unemployed workers with the subset of workers who receive UI. If all states adopted just three of the recommendations below—extending eligibility to part-time workers, extending eligibility to workers who voluntarily quit a job for good cause, and extending eligibility to workers who qualify under the alternative base period—the UI system would cover 13 percent more newly unemployed workers, according to updated analysis by the Urban Institute commissioned for the CAP, GCPI, and NELP report.[21] Furthermore, by improving the adequacy of UI benefits, these recommendations would not only increase working families' economic security but also boost states' labor force participation rates. The more workers that a state's UI program protects—and the more adequate that protection—the more powerful UI's stabilizing response will be when the state's unemployment rate rises. (see Table 1 for individual states' eligibility provisions)

Reform eligibility criteria

- **Modify the base period for determining eligibility:** Many individuals do not qualify for UI under the standard base period—generally the first four of the previous five completed calendar quarters—despite having recent work history. States that have not already done so should adopt the alternative base period, comprising the immediately preceding four quarters—which would disproportionately affect eligibility of low-wage workers—as well as the extended base period, which would affect workers with qualifying conditions such as illness or injury. States should also extend the base period to 18 months to cover workers with erratic work schedules; this longer period would avoid penalizing workers for scheduling practices that they cannot control.

- **Promote parity for low-paid workers:** Low-wage workers typically must work more hours than higher-wage workers to qualify for UI because monetary eligibility rules in most states are based on earnings. States should ensure that workers are monetarily eligible for UI if they have earned at least 300 times the state's hourly minimum wage during the base period and worked in at least two quarters. This would ensure, for example, that a worker who earned the minimum wage for 15 hours per week over a period of 20 weeks would qualify for UI.[22] Furthermore, states should consider requiring employers to report hours worked, as well as using this information to create an alternative eligibility standard based on hours for workers who do not meet the earnings-based standard.

- **Extend eligibility to part-time workers:** One-third of states do not currently allow unemployed part-time workers with qualifying work histories who wish to seek comparable part-time employment to receive UI. These states should allow part-time workers to receive UI. States should also allow certain claimants who qualify based on full-time work but have experienced a significant life change—such as the birth of a child—to search for part-time work, waiving the full-time work-search requirements for these individuals.[23]

- **Reform qualifying reasons for leaving work:** States should make several commonsense exceptions to the typical requirement that workers must lose a job through no fault of their own to qualify for UI. First, states should permit employees who face unreasonable scheduling practices to voluntarily separate from work without disqualifying them from receiving UI. Second, states should consider allowing unrestricted voluntary separations for compelling personal or family reasons—or, at a minimum, expand allowable reasons to include escaping domestic violence; caring for themselves or a family member during illness or injury; caring for children when child care has been lost and an alternative arrangement cannot be reasonably secured; or moving with a spouse, partner, or co-parent who must relocate. States should exempt employers from charges through experience-rated taxation in the case of a non-work-related voluntary separation.

- **Extend protection to seasonal and temporary workers:** States should treat seasonal and temporary workers identically to other workers for purposes of determining UI eligibility.[24] In particular, states should treat the end of temporary workers' assignments as involuntary termination of employment and eliminate requirements that temporary workers report back to the temp agency that laid them off to ensure there is not a new assignment available before they may be eligible for UI.[25] These requirements trap workers in a repeated cycle of short-lived, dead-end jobs.

- **Enact strong partial UI formulas:** Partial UI allows claimants to work part time and receive a portion of their UI benefits while seeking more stable long-term employment, thereby encouraging claimants to remain connected to the workforce and allowing them to take in a more adequate income.[26] States should allow claimants to qualify for partial UI as long as they are working less than full time and earning wages less than 150 percent of their weekly benefit rate. States should also disregard part-time wages worth at least half of a claimant's weekly benefit rate when calculating a claimant's partial UI benefit.

- **End the widespread misclassification of employees as independent contractors:** States can act now—including through governors' executive action—to crack down on employers that avoid paying UI taxes and illegally prevent their employees from accessing UI by misclassifying them as independent contractors. For example, states can increase resources for identifying employers that are in violation and enforcing existing laws or establish a task force to investigate how enforcement efforts can be strengthened.[27]

TABLE 1

Select UI eligibility provisions by state

	Good cause for leaving work		Nonstandard base periods		Part-time availability		
State	All valid reasons for good cause accepted	Compelling family reasons accepted	Alternative base period	Extended base period	Permitted or permitted with good cause	Permitted with part-time work history	Work sharing program
Alabama							
Alaska	✔	✔	✔	✔			
Arizona				✔			✔
Arkansas		✔	✔	✔		✔	✔
California	✔	✔	✔		✔		✔
Colorado		✔	✔			✔	✔
Connecticut		✔	✔	✔			✔
Delaware		✔	✔		✔		
District of Columbia		✔	✔		✔		✔
Florida					✔		✔
Georgia			✔			✔	
Hawaii	✔	✔	✔			✔	
Idaho			✔	✔		✔	
Illinois		✔	✔	✔			✔*
Indiana				✔			
Iowa			✔	✔		✔	✔
Kansas			✔	✔		✔	✔
Kentucky				✔			
Louisiana					✔		
Maine		✔	✔	✔	✔		✔
Maryland			✔			✔	✔
Massachusetts			✔	✔	✔		✔
Michigan			✔				✔
Minnesota		✔	✔	✔		✔	✔
Mississippi							
Missouri							✔
Montana			✔	✔		✔	
Nebraska			✔			✔	✔
Nevada	✔		✔	✔		✔	
New Hampshire		✔	✔			✔	✔
New Jersey			✔			✔	✔
New Mexico			✔				
New York	✔	✔	✔			✔	✔

State	Good cause for leaving work: All valid reasons for good cause accepted	Good cause for leaving work: Compelling family reasons accepted	Nonstandard base periods: Alternative base period	Nonstandard base periods: Extended base period	Part-time availability: Permitted or permitted with good cause	Part-time availability: Permitted with part-time work history	Work sharing program
North Carolina			✔	✔		✔	
North Dakota							
Ohio			✔				✔
Oklahoma		✔	✔	✔		✔	
Oregon	✔	✔	✔	✔			✔
Pennsylvania	✔			✔	✔		✔
Rhode Island	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔		✔
South Carolina		✔	✔			✔	
South Dakota			✔	✔		✔	
Tennessee				✔			
Texas				✔			✔
Utah	✔		✔	✔			
Vermont			✔			✔	✔
Virginia			✔				✔
Washington		✔	✔				✔
West Virginia			✔				
Wisconsin		✔	✔				✔
Wyoming				✔	✔		
Total	**9**	**19**	**38**	**25**	**10**	**20**	**29**

*According to the U.S. Department of Labor, Illinois established a work sharing program, but as of January 2015, it is no longer active.

Notes: States that accept all valid reasons for good cause for leaving work recognize reasons that would motivate a reasonable person to leave a job in similar circumstances, including reasons not attributable to the employer. At a minimum, accepted compelling family circumstances typically include escaping domestic violence, relocating to accompany a spouse to a new job, and separating from work to fulfill to caregiving responsibilities.

Sources: Rick McHugh and others, "Unemployment Insurance Policy Advocate's Toolkit" (New York: National Employment Law Project, 2015), available at http://www.nelp.org/content/uploads/Unemployment-Insurance-Policy-Advocates-Complete-Toolkit.pdf; U.S. Department of Labor , Comparison of State Unemployment Laws, *Chapter 3: Monetary Entitlement* (2016), available at http://workforcesecurity.doleta.gov/unemploy/pdf/uilawcompar/2016/monetary.pdf. From the same source see also *Chapter 4: Extensions and Special Programs,* available at http://www.unemploymentinsurance.doleta.gov/unemploy/pdf/uilawcompar/2016/special.pdf; *Chapter 5: Nonmonetary Eligibility,* available at http://workforcesecurity.doleta.gov/unemploy/pdf/uilawcompar/2016/nonmonetary.pdf.

Boost benefit adequacy

- **Offer at least 26 weeks of benefits without delay:** States should provide a uniform maximum duration of at least 26 weeks—the conventional maximum duration under the program's original design—of state-funded UI benefits for all claimants in nonrecessionary times. And the 42 states that require eligible workers to wait one week to qualify to receive benefits should eliminate this so-called waiting week.[28] (see Table 2)

- **Ensure that benefits replace a sufficient share of wages for low- and middle-income recipients.** To calculate a claimant's weekly benefit amount, 29 states currently use the so-called high-quarter method, which bases benefits on the worker's highest-earnings quarter during the base period.[29] Remaining states should switch to the high-quarter method and replace at least 50 percent of wages for workers whose benefit amount falls below the maximum weekly benefit. States should tie their maximum weekly benefit amount to at least half of their average weekly wage.

Increase program access and recipiency

- **Make workers aware that they may qualify for UI:** Notify all employees of potential UI eligibility, such as by sending workers notifications by mail when they separate from employers. States could achieve this by requiring employers to alert the state to the separation[30]—at which time the state would send notification to the worker, an action that is already federally reimbursable[31]—or by requiring employers to notify workers of potential eligibility directly, as under Massachusetts law.[32]

- **Facilitate connections to UI benefits:** States should ensure that the process of filing initial and continuing claims for UI benefits through their automated online claim-filing systems can be readily understood and accomplished by the vast majority of claimants, including workers with limited English proficiency, disabled workers, older workers, and workers with literacy challenges. States should also provide alternate means of filing claims for workers who are unable to file through the online system. Furthermore, they should encourage employer filing by providing methods for employers to file initial and weekly claims on behalf of their employees for short-term layoffs and business shutdowns, partial UI, and work sharing.

3. Prepare the unemployment insurance system for the next recession

The next recession is inevitable, and it is critical that policymakers strengthen UI—the U.S. economy's first line of defense—before it arrives. CAP, GCPI, and NELP's proposal would significantly increase federal resources for states to combat downturns and maintain their programs' solvency. The proposal would boost federal dollars for workforce development and re-employment initiatives, including Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessments, or RESEAs.[33] Furthermore, as part of the plan to repair the Extended Benefits, or EB, program, the report proposes full federal funding for the EB program, ending the current equal split with states.[34] It would also provide full federal funding for work sharing for at least one year in states where the EB program was activated. Additionally, states that exceeded trust fund solvency targets would be rewarded with differentially higher interest rate payments. States would also receive partial federal reimbursement for certain types of UI benefits, including benefits claimed for reasons unrelated to the employer. (see Table 1)

Reform UI's financing and improve solvency

- **Make the state unemployment tax significantly more progressive:** States should broaden the taxable wage base of their State Unemployment Tax Act, or SUTA[35], taxes to at least half of the Social Security taxable wage base—or about $59,000—over a period of six years and link the base to the Social Security base going forward so that it does not erode. Simultaneously, they should lower the SUTA tax rate, raising sufficient revenue to support their obligations under the CAP, GCPI, and NELP proposal.

- **Ensure trust fund solvency:** Only 18 states currently have an average high-cost multiple, or AHCM, of 1.0 or greater in their unemployment trust funds—meaning they have a level of reserves sufficient to finance UI benefits for at least one year under recession-like conditions.[36] States should build up reserves such that they attain an AHCM of at least 1.0 within five years and maintain this target thereafter. They should link SUTA tax rates to trust fund reserves so that rates automatically increase when the trust fund is forecasted to dip below this target AHCM during economic expansions.

- **Prevent unemployment tax evasion:** State governors can act now through executive action to increase funding for enforcement efforts to reduce SUTA dumping, a tax evasion scheme whereby a firm buys another firm that has a lower SUTA tax rate—or creates a shell company—and shifts its workers to this new firm in order to avoid taxes.[37]

Improve the ability to respond to recessions

- **Ramp up re-employment services during recessions:** Executive action can also allow state governors to provide Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessments, or RESEAs[38], to every long-term unemployed worker receiving Extended Benefits during periods of federal reimbursement, when unemployment is high or rising.

- **Relieve financial burdens on employers during times of reduced demand:** States should adjust their SUTA tax rates to become countercyclical such that rates fall as unemployment rises. To further decrease employers' tax burdens and encourage the use of work sharing as an alternative to layoffs, states should suspend experience rating of work sharing benefits during periods of federal reimbursement.

TABLE 2

Select indicators of state UI benefit adequacy, financing, and solvency

State	Maximum weeks of benefits available	Waiting week	Average weekly benefit amount*	Maximum weekly benefit amount*	UI recipiency rate	Replacement ratio for claimants' wages	Taxable wage base	Average high-cost multiple
Alabama	26	✔	25.5%	31.5%	17.4%	39.0%	$8,000	0.75
Alaska	26	✔	25.0%	35.6%	45.5%	32.3%	$39,700	1.51
Arizona	26	✔	24.5%	26.4%	15.3%	41.8%	$7,000	0.11
Arkansas	20**	✔	38.6%	58.3%	30.4%	50.8%	$12,000	0.7
California	26	✔	26.2%	38.8%	32.8%	45.6%	$7,000	0
Colorado	26	✔	36.8%	48.9%	29.1%	50.4%	$12,200	0.58
Connecticut	26		28.3%	47.9%	40.0%	43.8%	$15,000	0.02
Delaware	26	✔	24.3%	32.1%	31.2%	40.6%	$18,500	0.35
District of Columbia	26	✔	17.7%	21.5%	32.1%	38.8%	$9,000	0.97
Florida	12**	✔	27.3%	31.6%	10.9%	42.0%	$7,000	0.88
Georgia	14**		28.9%	35.3%	13.7%	45.6%	$9,500	0.57
Hawaii	26	✔	49.5%	62.4%	33.8%	55.0%	$42,200	1.21
Idaho	26**	✔	39.6%	53.9%	25.4%	49.6%	$37,200	1.27
Illinois	26	✔	31.4%	40.4%	31.0%	38.6%	$12,960	0.38
Indiana	26	✔	30.8%	47.1%	18.4%	36.1%	$9,500	0.02
Iowa	26		43.0%	52.0%	38.5%	53.2%	$28,300	1.25
Kansas	16**	✔	43.3%	57.1%	27.8%	54.3%	$14,000	0.78
Kentucky	26	✔	36.6%	50.9%	22.8%	47.3%	$10,200	0
Louisiana	26	✔	24.0%	28.2%	15.4%	37.3%	$7,700	1.28
Maine	26	✔	37.6%	50.5%	30.0%	50.9%	$12,000	1.09
Maryland	26		30.2%	39.9%	24.5%	47.9%	$8,500	0.76
Massachusetts	30	✔	35.1%	55.5%	42.9%	47.2%	$15,000	0.27
Michigan	20**		29.9%	38.4%	25.9%	49.2%	$9,000	0.76
Minnesota	26	✔	39.4%	41.9%	42.9%	49.3%	$31,000	1.06
Mississippi	26	✔	28.1%	32.8%	14.7%	40.7%	$14,000	1.82
Missouri	13**	✔	28.5%	37.2%	20.8%	41.8%	$13,000	0.35
Montana	28	✔	40.2%	64.3%	38.2%	47.2%	$30,500	1.48
Nebraska	26	✔	36.6%	47.2%	24.2%	48.5%	$9,000	1.71
Nevada	26		36.6%	48.2%	26.3%	49.9%	$28,200	0.46
New Hampshire	26	✔	29.9%	43.2%	18.9%	39.1%	$14,000	1.12
New Jersey	26		34.4%	54.8%	44.7%	51.7%	$32,600	0.33
New Mexico	26	✔	38.3%	50.7%	21.2%	51.0%	$24,100	0.7
New York	26	✔	24.5%	33.3%	34.8%	42.1%	$10,700	0.05
North Carolina	12**	✔	26.3%	39.9%	12.4%	40.4%	$22,300	0.61

State	Maximum weeks of benefits available	Waiting week	Average weekly benefit amount*	Maximum weekly benefit amount*	UI recipiency rate	Replacement ratio for claimants' wages	Taxable wage base	Average high-cost multiple
North Dakota	26	✔	47.8%	64.1%	70.0%	54.0%	$37,200	0.75
Ohio	26	✔	37.5%	47.5%	23.8%	44.9%	$9,000	0
Oklahoma	26	✔	40.8%	57.8%	27.7%	55.3%	$17,500	2
Oregon	26	✔	37.3%	60.5%	29.9%	48.0%	$36,900	1.77
Pennsylvania	26	✔	37.4%	58.2%	44.6%	52.7%	$9,500	0.21
Rhode Island	26	✔	34.9%	59.1%	31.5%	44.9%	$22,000	0.25
South Carolina	20**	✔	31.9%	41.2%	12.6%	45.3%	$14,000	0.37
South Dakota	26	✔	39.2%	48.4%	13.8%	48.9%	$15,000	1.52
Tennessee	26	✔	25.4%	31.3%	15.0%	38.8%	$8,000	0.85
Texas	26	✔	35.7%	45.0%	28.8%	50.1%	$9,000	0.29
Utah	26	✔	43.0%	59.4%	21.3%	49.1%	$32,200	1.78
Vermont	26	✔	38.9%	53.4%	41.7%	49.9%	$16,800	1.27
Virginia	26	✔	29.0%	36.7%	17.2%	43.8%	$8,000	0.68
Washington	26	✔	37.9%	62.1%	27.0%	48.6%	$44,000	1.31
West Virginia	26	✔	36.4%	53.1%	31.7%	41.8%	$12,000	0.25
Wisconsin	26	✔	34.0%	43.4%	35.8%	44.8%	$14,000	0.43
Wyoming	26	✔	43.1%	54.7%	45.5%	52.6%	$25,500	2.35

* As a share of state's average weekly wage

** Fewer than 26 weeks

Notes: Maximum weeks of benefits available and waiting weeks are as of 2016. States shown with two asterisks have reduced their maximum regular benefit weeks below the conventional 26 weeks. In March 2016, Idaho approved a bill that will vary the number of available weeks from 10 to 26, depending on the state's unemployment rate. The legislation took effect July 1, 2016. State average weekly UI benefit amounts and state average weekly wages in covered employment are for the 12 months ending June 30, 2015. State maximum UI benefit amounts are as of 2015. For recipiency rates, data cover weeks claimed of state UI, Unemployment Compensation for Federal Civilian Employees, and Unemployment Compensation for Ex-Servicemembers. The replacement ratio is the average ratio of UI claimants' weekly benefit amounts to their usual hourly wages, normalized to a 40-hour workweek. States' taxable wage bases for the State Unemployment Tax Act, or SUTA, tax are as of the third quarter of 2015. The average high-cost multiple is as of January 2016; states with an average high-cost multiple of 1.0 or greater have a level of reserves that can be expected to finance UI benefits for at least one year under recession-like conditions.

Sources: Authors' calculations are from Employment and Training Administration, Unemployment Insurance Data Summary (U.S. Department of Labor, 2015), available at http://ows.doleta.gov/unemploy/content/data_stats/datasum15/DataSum_2015_2.pdf; Employment and Training Administration, Significant Provisions of State Unemployment Insurance Laws Effective July 2015 (U.S. Department of Labor, 2015), available at http://www.unemploymentinsurance.doleta.gov/unemploy/content/sigpros/2010-2019/July2015.pdf; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages," available at http://www.bls.gov/cew/data.htm (last accessed March 2016); Office of Unemployment Insurance, Trust Fund Solvency Report (U.S. Department of Labor, 2016), available at http://www.ows.doleta.gov/unemploy/docs/trustFundSolvReport.pdf; Employment and Training Administration, Unemployment Insurance Data Summary (U.S. Department of Labor, 2016), available at http://oui.doleta.gov/unemploy/content/data_stats/datasum16/DataSum_2016_1.pdf; Employment and Training Administration, "Report 5159: Claims and Payment Activities," available at http://ows.doleta.gov/unemploy/DataDownloads.asp (last accessed March 2016); U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Labor Force Statistics from the Current Population Survey," Table A-1, available at http://www.bls.gov/webapps/legacy/cpsatab1.htm (last accessed March 2016). For maximum weeks of benefits in Missouri and Idaho, see Missouri Department of Labor, "Unemployment Insurance Notices," available at http://labor.mo.gov/DES/notices (last accessed June 2016); Legislature of the State of Idaho, H.B. 485, 63rd Leg. 2d sess. (Idaho House of Representatives, 2016), available at https://www.legislature.idaho.gov/legislation/2016/H0485.pdf; Idaho Legislature, "House Bill 485," available at https://www.legislature.idaho.gov/legislation/2016/H0485.htm (last accessed July 2016).

Conclusion

UI is a crucial pillar of the social insurance system, benefiting both American families and the economy. With more than two-thirds of Americans experiencing at least one year of their own unemployment or the unemployment of their household heads during their working years[39]—and with the next recession inevitably approaching—now is the time to update this system for the 21st century.

In the midst of partisan gridlock, states should not risk waiting for congressional action before taking steps to modernize their UI programs. Fortunately, states can enact many meaningful changes on their own, starting today. By adopting reforms to strengthen UI, states would ensure a significantly more robust system of assistance for unemployed workers and their families, raise labor force participation, and benefit economically from much greater protection when the next recession arrives.

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Appendix

TABLE 3A

Characteristics of UI recipients compared with all unemployed workers by state, 2006–2015

Gender

	Women		Men	
	All unemployed workers	UI recipients	All unemployed workers	UI recipients
United States	**44.1%**	**42.6%**	**55.9%**	**57.4%**
Alabama	45.5%	48.1%	54.5%	51.9%
Alaska	37.6%	39.7%	62.4%	60.3%
Arizona	41.7%	42.7%	58.3%	57.3%
Arkansas	46.2%	42.7%	53.8%	57.3%
California	43.3%	43.9%	56.7%	56.1%
Colorado	42.3%	40.0%	57.7%	60.0%
Connecticut	45.1%	42.8%	54.9%	57.2%
Delaware	47.0%	44.4%	53.0%	55.6%
District of Columbia	51.6%	53.1%	48.4%	46.9%
Florida	43.3%	44.5%	56.7%	55.5%
Georgia	48.1%	45.8%	51.9%	54.2%
Hawaii	41.2%	33.8%	58.8%	66.2%
Idaho	43.0%	38.5%	57.0%	61.5%
Illinois	42.4%	40.3%	57.6%	59.7%
Indiana	45.6%	40.9%	54.4%	59.1%
Iowa	44.4%	37.9%	55.6%	62.1%
Kansas	46.5%	41.1%	53.5%	58.9%
Kentucky	42.8%	38.8%	57.2%	61.2%
Louisiana	46.1%	48.4%	53.9%	51.6%
Maine	42.9%	40.1%	57.1%	59.9%
Maryland	47.5%	44.3%	52.5%	55.7%
Massachusetts	41.9%	38.6%	58.1%	61.4%
Michigan	42.9%	37.9%	57.1%	62.1%
Minnesota	42.1%	35.5%	57.9%	64.5%
Mississippi	45.6%	51.2%	54.4%	48.8%
Missouri	44.9%	44.8%	55.1%	55.2%
Montana	41.3%	39.2%	58.7%	60.8%
Nebraska	48.0%	44.0%	52.0%	56.0%
Nevada	41.8%	37.4%	58.2%	62.6%
New Hampshire	42.6%	41.8%	57.4%	58.2%

	Women		Men	
	All unemployed workers	UI recipients	All unemployed workers	UI recipients
New Jersey	45.0%	45.0%	55.0%	55.0%
New Mexico	45.1%	40.7%	54.9%	59.3%
New York	44.0%	42.8%	56.0%	57.2%
North Carolina	46.5%	42.4%	53.5%	57.6%
North Dakota	43.3%	26.0%	56.7%	74.0%
Ohio	43.3%	36.3%	56.7%	63.7%
Oklahoma	43.8%	43.5%	56.2%	56.5%
Oregon	42.5%	40.3%	57.5%	59.7%
Pennsylvania	43.7%	42.7%	56.3%	57.3%
Rhode Island	42.9%	45.4%	57.1%	54.6%
South Carolina	46.9%	47.7%	53.1%	52.3%
South Dakota	45.7%	40.4%	54.3%	59.6%
Tennessee	44.7%	46.2%	55.3%	53.8%
Texas	46.4%	43.9%	53.6%	56.1%
Utah	40.7%	35.7%	59.3%	64.3%
Vermont	46.4%	39.8%	53.6%	60.2%
Virginia	46.5%	42.5%	53.5%	57.5%
Washington	42.0%	37.5%	58.0%	62.5%
West Virginia	39.1%	31.3%	60.9%	68.7%
Wisconsin	42.0%	40.5%	58.0%	59.5%
Wyoming	44.5%	32.0%	55.5%	68.0%

Notes: Except for educational attainment, which is limited to individuals ages 25 and older, estimates are for individuals from ages 16 to 85. The Benefit Accuracy Measurement, or BAM, survey data are a statistical sampling of state UI administrative data managed by the U.S. Department of Labor. The sample captures paid claims in three programs: state UI, Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees, and Unemployment Compensation for Ex-Servicemembers. Data from 2006 to 2015 are pooled together. Data are weighted to account for state population size and volume of benefit payments.

Sources: Estimates of unemployed workers are based on authors' calculations using Center for Economic and Policy Research uniform extracts of the Current Population Survey Outgoing Rotation Group. See CEPRdata, "CPS Outgoing Rotation Group," available at http://ceprdata.org/cps-uniform-data-extracts/cps-outgoing-rotation-group/ (last accessed March 2016). Estimates of UI recipients are based on authors' calculations using data provided upon request by the BAM program of the U.S. Department of Labor in February 2016.

TABLE 3B

Characteristics of UI recipients compared with all unemployed workers by state, 2006–2015

Educational attainment

	Less than high school		High school or GED		Some college or associate's degree		College or higher	
	All unemployed workers	UI recipients	All unemployed workers	UI recipients	All unemployed workers	UI recipients	All unemployed workers	UI recipients
United States	**14.0%**	**14.4%**	**36.2%**	**38.5%**	**28.7%**	**29.9%**	**21.0%**	**17.2%**
Alabama	15.5%	16.6%	40.9%	47.3%	29.3%	24.7%	14.3%	11.4%
Alaska	8.0%	11.8%	42.5%	50.7%	35.3%	27.4%	14.2%	10.1%
Arizona	19.0%	21.6%	31.5%	30.4%	30.5%	34.9%	19.0%	13.1%
Arkansas	16.9%	14.8%	41.6%	47.1%	27.7%	29.4%	13.8%	8.7%
California	19.7%	22.3%	28.4%	24.9%	28.5%	32.6%	23.3%	20.2%
Colorado	12.8%	12.3%	26.7%	26.1%	32.3%	39.2%	28.2%	22.4%
Connecticut	11.2%	14.4%	38.3%	40.1%	25.3%	27.2%	25.2%	18.4%
Delaware	12.1%	13.4%	42.5%	45.8%	25.7%	26.7%	19.7%	14.1%
District of Columbia	14.8%	10.2%	36.7%	30.1%	18.1%	25.7%	30.4%	34.0%
Florida	10.7%	13.0%	38.1%	39.3%	29.5%	30.5%	21.7%	17.3%
Georgia	13.7%	14.9%	36.7%	40.9%	29.6%	25.6%	19.9%	18.7%
Hawaii	8.6%	10.0%	40.2%	46.3%	31.3%	28.1%	19.9%	15.5%
Idaho	12.8%	16.5%	32.7%	37.5%	35.2%	33.6%	19.3%	12.4%
Illinois	12.3%	13.9%	36.9%	36.4%	27.6%	31.4%	23.2%	18.3%
Indiana	12.6%	12.0%	43.6%	48.9%	28.9%	27.3%	14.8%	11.8%
Iowa	12.7%	9.8%	37.6%	52.6%	33.5%	25.7%	16.1%	11.9%
Kansas	9.9%	11.3%	34.1%	40.7%	31.9%	32.2%	24.0%	15.8%
Kentucky	15.9%	13.3%	39.6%	46.6%	30.1%	28.5%	14.4%	11.6%
Louisiana	19.3%	16.9%	42.0%	44.7%	26.8%	27.3%	12.0%	11.1%
Maine	9.2%	10.2%	44.2%	50.7%	28.8%	25.1%	17.8%	13.9%
Maryland	10.3%	12.0%	36.8%	42.8%	25.4%	26.3%	27.5%	18.8%
Massachusetts	8.7%	10.8%	35.0%	38.6%	25.0%	27.3%	31.3%	23.3%
Michigan	9.1%	9.9%	41.4%	44.7%	32.1%	31.7%	17.3%	13.8%
Minnesota	8.9%	7.2%	30.0%	48.0%	36.5%	26.5%	24.6%	18.3%
Mississippi	18.3%	19.3%	38.5%	41.9%	30.7%	29.5%	12.5%	9.3%
Missouri	12.0%	12.3%	42.4%	43.3%	30.1%	31.3%	15.5%	13.0%
Montana	9.2%	7.6%	37.8%	44.6%	33.7%	32.3%	19.3%	15.5%
Nebraska	12.7%	11.8%	35.3%	44.6%	32.7%	29.3%	19.2%	14.3%
Nevada	14.9%	17.0%	40.1%	37.3%	29.2%	33.7%	15.8%	12.0%
New Hampshire	6.8%	8.8%	34.9%	41.3%	30.4%	30.2%	27.8%	19.7%
New Jersey	9.0%	12.8%	38.4%	39.5%	25.0%	26.8%	27.5%	20.9%

	Less than high school		High school or GED		Some college or associate's degree		College or higher	
	All unemployed workers	UI recipients	All unemployed workers	UI recipients	All unemployed workers	UI recipients	All unemployed workers	UI recipients
New Mexico	15.0%	18.6%	32.2%	35.5%	32.3%	32.1%	20.6%	13.8%
New York	12.7%	13.9%	33.3%	30.6%	26.0%	31.0%	28.1%	24.5%
North Carolina	18.1%	17.4%	36.0%	44.2%	27.6%	27.2%	18.3%	11.2%
North Dakota	11.0%	11.5%	35.5%	45.2%	33.4%	30.3%	20.2%	13.1%
Ohio	11.1%	9.0%	43.9%	47.9%	28.5%	29.9%	16.4%	13.2%
Oklahoma	12.9%	12.2%	37.8%	41.9%	32.6%	32.3%	16.6%	13.6%
Oregon	10.3%	12.8%	34.8%	35.4%	35.6%	36.0%	19.2%	15.8%
Pennsylvania	10.2%	10.2%	45.1%	51.4%	24.3%	22.9%	20.4%	15.5%
Rhode Island	16.3%	15.1%	36.8%	37.1%	27.6%	28.9%	19.4%	18.9%
South Carolina	17.2%	15.1%	39.7%	44.2%	29.1%	28.6%	14.1%	12.1%
South Dakota	14.0%	10.3%	39.4%	44.1%	30.6%	28.8%	16.0%	16.8%
Tennessee	15.2%	14.1%	42.0%	44.9%	26.2%	27.5%	16.6%	13.6%
Texas	21.0%	16.0%	32.9%	33.0%	27.5%	32.6%	18.6%	18.4%
Utah	8.4%	12.3%	39.0%	38.0%	33.4%	31.5%	19.1%	18.2%
Vermont	10.0%	12.4%	40.8%	42.3%	24.8%	26.2%	24.4%	19.0%
Virginia	14.1%	11.9%	35.7%	36.1%	26.5%	32.7%	23.7%	19.2%
Washington	11.1%	12.4%	28.6%	33.3%	35.2%	36.1%	25.2%	18.2%
West Virginia	15.1%	13.6%	51.0%	53.7%	21.7%	24.3%	12.1%	8.4%
Wisconsin	9.1%	12.5%	40.1%	53.1%	31.8%	22.6%	19.0%	11.9%
Wyoming	10.9%	11.0%	43.2%	44.3%	32.9%	32.0%	13.1%	12.8%

Notes: Except for educational attainment, which is limited to individuals ages 25 and older, estimates are for individuals from ages 16 to 85. The Benefit Accuracy Measurement, or BAM, survey data are a statistical sampling of state UI administrative data managed by the U.S. Department of Labor. The sample captures paid claims in three programs: state UI, Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees, and Unemployment Compensation for Ex-Servicemembers. Data from 2006 to 2015 are pooled together. Data are weighted to account for state population size and volume of benefit payments.

Sources: Estimates of unemployed workers are based on authors' calculations using Center for Economic and Policy Research uniform extracts of the Current Population Survey Outgoing Rotation Group. See CEPRdata, "CPS Outgoing Rotation Group," available at http://ceprdata.org/cps-uniform-data-extracts/cps-outgoing-rotation-group/ (last accessed March 2016). Estimates of UI recipients are based on authors' calculations using data provided upon request by the BAM program of the U.S. Department of Labor in February 2016.

TABLE 3C

Characteristics of UI recipients compared with all unemployed workers by state, 2006–2015

Race/ethnicity

	White, non-Latino		Nonwhite, non-Latino		Latino, any race	
	All unemployed workers	UI recipients	All unemployed workers	UI recipients	All unemployed workers	UI recipients
United States	**55.0%**	**60.3%**	**26.1%**	**22.9%**	**18.9%**	**16.7%**
Alabama	52.8%	55.1%	42.9%	43.7%	4.3%	1.3%
Alaska	58.8%	53.2%	35.4%	39.7%	5.8%	7.1%
Arizona	47.0%	49.9%	13.9%	14.1%	39.2%	36.0%
Arkansas	62.7%	66.5%	31.9%	29.3%	5.4%	4.2%
California	35.4%	37.8%	21.5%	19.7%	43.1%	42.5%
Colorado	64.4%	66.0%	11.2%	11.2%	24.4%	22.8%
Connecticut	61.0%	63.4%	19.6%	18.6%	19.4%	18.0%
Delaware	55.4%	60.0%	35.6%	35.2%	9.0%	4.9%
District of Columbia	15.5%	18.6%	76.7%	73.0%	7.7%	8.4%
Florida	48.9%	52.6%	26.2%	22.8%	24.9%	24.5%
Georgia	40.3%	47.0%	50.8%	48.8%	8.9%	4.2%
Hawaii	20.4%	25.5%	67.9%	64.9%	11.7%	9.5%
Idaho	80.3%	82.0%	5.4%	3.8%	14.3%	14.3%
Illinois	55.3%	57.7%	28.6%	25.8%	16.1%	16.5%
Indiana	75.9%	81.2%	17.3%	15.1%	6.8%	3.7%
Iowa	79.1%	87.0%	12.4%	8.4%	8.5%	4.6%
Kansas	70.1%	76.2%	19.4%	17.7%	10.5%	6.1%
Kentucky	81.8%	85.2%	14.7%	12.9%	3.5%	1.8%
Louisiana	44.2%	44.4%	50.1%	53.2%	5.7%	2.4%
Maine	91.4%	95.2%	7.1%	3.5%	1.4%	1.3%
Maryland	43.2%	52.3%	48.7%	42.2%	8.2%	5.5%
Massachusetts	70.2%	78.2%	15.5%	11.9%	14.3%	9.9%
Michigan	68.8%	75.8%	26.6%	20.0%	4.7%	4.2%
Minnesota	74.4%	85.2%	19.9%	10.9%	5.7%	3.9%
Mississippi	40.0%	38.0%	57.1%	60.8%	2.9%	1.2%
Missouri	72.4%	75.8%	24.0%	22.2%	3.7%	2.0%
Montana	83.7%	84.5%	13.2%	12.7%	3.1%	2.8%
Nebraska	68.8%	77.6%	18.3%	14.0%	12.9%	8.4%
Nevada	49.3%	57.1%	20.9%	20.3%	29.8%	22.7%
New Hampshire	90.6%	91.7%	5.0%	4.7%	4.4%	3.6%
New Jersey	51.9%	55.0%	26.5%	25.0%	21.7%	20.0%

	White, non-Latino		Nonwhite, non-Latino		Latino, any race	
	All unemployed workers	UI recipients	All unemployed workers	UI recipients	All unemployed workers	UI recipients
New Mexico	35.2%	33.2%	15.8%	15.3%	49.0%	51.5%
New York	49.9%	56.4%	30.1%	25.1%	20.0%	18.5%
North Carolina	51.8%	58.1%	39.7%	37.1%	8.5%	4.8%
North Dakota	69.4%	81.8%	27.9%	12.5%	2.8%	5.6%
Ohio	73.7%	80.5%	22.9%	17.2%	3.4%	2.4%
Oklahoma	57.7%	68.1%	33.9%	27.5%	8.4%	4.4%
Oregon	77.0%	81.7%	11.1%	8.0%	11.9%	10.3%
Pennsylvania	72.3%	78.3%	19.5%	16.0%	8.2%	5.7%
Rhode Island	66.9%	78.7%	13.2%	9.3%	19.9%	12.1%
South Carolina	50.4%	48.9%	45.3%	49.5%	4.3%	1.7%
South Dakota	71.1%	75.4%	24.4%	20.8%	4.5%	3.7%
Tennessee	67.2%	73.7%	28.5%	25.2%	4.3%	1.0%
Texas	35.5%	40.8%	24.3%	26.5%	40.2%	32.6%
Utah	75.4%	79.0%	8.9%	8.1%	15.7%	12.9%
Vermont	93.8%	95.4%	5.4%	3.5%	0.8%	1.0%
Virginia	56.6%	55.5%	36.5%	39.0%	6.9%	5.5%
Washington	69.9%	74.5%	17.8%	13.7%	12.3%	11.8%
West Virginia	92.4%	94.8%	6.9%	4.6%	0.8%	0.6%
Wisconsin	71.9%	80.1%	20.9%	14.2%	7.2%	5.7%
Wyoming	80.0%	83.4%	9.3%	6.5%	10.7%	10.1%

Notes: Except for educational attainment, which is limited to individuals ages 25 and older, estimates are for individuals from ages 16 to 85. The Benefit Accuracy Measurement, or BAM, survey data are a statistical sampling of state UI administrative data managed by the U.S. Department of Labor. The sample captures paid claims in three programs: state UI, Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees, and Unemployment Compensation for Ex-Servicemembers. Data from 2006 to 2015 are pooled together. Data are weighted to account for state population size and volume of benefit payments.

Sources: Estimates of unemployed workers are based on authors' calculations using Center for Economic and Policy Research uniform extracts of the Current Population Survey Outgoing Rotation Group. See CEPRdata, "CPS Outgoing Rotation Group," available at http://ceprdata.org/cps-uniform-data-extracts/cps-outgoing-rotation-group/ (last accessed March 2016). Estimates of UI recipients are based on authors' calculations using data provided upon request by the BAM program of the U.S. Department of Labor in February 2016.

TABLE 3D

Characteristics of UI recipients compared with all unemployed workers by state, 2006–2015

Age

	16 years to 24 years		25 years to 44 years		45 years and older	
	All unemployed workers	UI recipients	All unemployed workers	UI recipients	All unemployed workers	UI recipients
United States	**28.7%**	**8.7%**	**40.0%**	**47.0%**	**31.4%**	**44.2%**
Alabama	31.2%	11.3%	44.6%	48.7%	24.3%	40.1%
Alaska	30.7%	11.9%	37.7%	47.2%	31.7%	40.9%
Arizona	29.6%	9.4%	37.8%	46.2%	32.6%	44.4%
Arkansas	30.6%	10.3%	40.8%	49.5%	28.6%	40.2%
California	27.6%	9.2%	40.9%	48.7%	31.5%	42.0%
Colorado	28.1%	6.6%	37.3%	47.3%	34.6%	46.1%
Connecticut	26.0%	9.9%	38.4%	45.2%	35.6%	44.8%
Delaware	28.0%	9.3%	39.2%	44.5%	32.8%	46.2%
District of Columbia	24.5%	7.7%	44.2%	50.4%	31.3%	41.9%
Florida	23.0%	7.2%	38.8%	45.1%	38.2%	47.7%
Georgia	27.8%	8.0%	43.2%	49.6%	29.1%	42.4%
Hawaii	30.2%	7.2%	39.0%	47.4%	30.7%	45.4%
Idaho	33.5%	10.2%	37.9%	46.7%	28.6%	43.1%
Illinois	27.7%	8.1%	39.5%	48.9%	32.8%	43.1%
Indiana	28.8%	8.1%	42.2%	48.1%	29.1%	43.9%
Iowa	32.3%	9.3%	36.1%	45.3%	31.6%	45.5%
Kansas	32.5%	9.4%	37.7%	47.4%	29.9%	43.2%
Kentucky	31.6%	8.1%	42.6%	48.5%	25.8%	43.4%
Louisiana	31.0%	10.7%	42.2%	49.1%	26.8%	40.2%
Maine	32.2%	9.9%	33.3%	43.2%	34.5%	47.0%
Maryland	30.5%	9.9%	38.2%	46.7%	31.3%	43.4%
Massachusetts	27.1%	8.0%	37.4%	45.1%	35.6%	46.9%
Michigan	27.6%	8.6%	40.6%	48.9%	31.9%	42.5%
Minnesota	30.0%	9.1%	35.9%	47.7%	34.1%	43.2%
Mississippi	31.8%	9.4%	42.9%	49.1%	25.3%	41.5%
Missouri	30.7%	7.4%	39.3%	48.0%	30.0%	44.5%
Montana	29.7%	8.3%	38.3%	43.4%	32.0%	48.3%
Nebraska	33.5%	8.8%	36.5%	45.4%	30.1%	45.8%
Nevada	25.7%	9.7%	40.8%	46.0%	33.5%	44.3%
New Hampshire	31.1%	5.4%	33.2%	41.3%	35.7%	53.3%
New Jersey	23.9%	9.3%	37.4%	44.1%	38.7%	46.6%

	16 years to 24 years		25 years to 44 years		45 years and older	
	All unemployed workers	UI recipients	All unemployed workers	UI recipients	All unemployed workers	UI recipients
New Mexico	25.8%	8.9%	43.4%	44.9%	30.8%	46.2%
New York	28.0%	10.0%	39.6%	48.0%	32.4%	42.0%
North Carolina	29.9%	9.2%	40.8%	45.2%	29.2%	45.6%
North Dakota	33.3%	7.2%	35.7%	44.7%	31.0%	48.1%
Ohio	30.6%	8.5%	39.0%	46.7%	30.4%	44.8%
Oklahoma	30.2%	9.7%	44.8%	49.3%	25.0%	41.0%
Oregon	27.7%	8.9%	40.3%	47.3%	32.1%	43.8%
Pennsylvania	30.5%	9.0%	36.6%	42.9%	32.9%	48.1%
Rhode Island	28.3%	8.8%	39.6%	43.3%	32.1%	48.0%
South Carolina	31.1%	10.7%	40.6%	46.5%	28.3%	42.8%
South Dakota	34.7%	6.6%	37.0%	42.4%	28.3%	51.0%
Tennessee	30.2%	9.0%	43.1%	45.3%	26.6%	45.7%
Texas	29.8%	7.7%	42.3%	50.3%	27.9%	42.0%
Utah	36.0%	11.4%	40.0%	51.5%	24.0%	37.1%
Vermont	30.1%	9.2%	33.5%	41.3%	36.4%	49.5%
Virginia	30.2%	7.7%	39.8%	46.4%	30.0%	45.9%
Washington	30.0%	8.5%	38.8%	49.0%	31.2%	42.5%
West Virginia	32.2%	9.9%	41.6%	49.6%	26.3%	40.5%
Wisconsin	31.1%	9.8%	39.6%	44.1%	29.3%	46.1%
Wyoming	32.5%	9.5%	36.0%	44.4%	31.5%	46.1%

Notes: Except for educational attainment, which is limited to individuals ages 25 and older, estimates are for individuals from ages 16 to 85. The Benefit Accuracy Measurement, or BAM, survey data are a statistical sampling of state UI administrative data managed by the U.S. Department of Labor. The sample captures paid claims in three programs: state UI, Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees, and Unemployment Compensation for Ex-Servicemembers. Data from 2006 to 2015 are pooled together. Data are weighted to account for state population size and volume of benefit payments.

Sources: Estimates of unemployed workers are based on authors' calculations using Center for Economic and Policy Research uniform extracts of the Current Population Survey Outgoing Rotation Group. See CEPRdata, "CPS Outgoing Rotation Group," available at http://ceprdata.org/cps-uniform-data-extracts/cps-outgoing-rotation-group/ (last accessed March 2016). Estimates of UI recipients are based on authors' calculations using data provided upon request by the BAM program of the U.S. Department of Labor in February 2016.

Endnotes

1 Rachel West and others, "Strengthening Unemployment Protections in America" (Washington: Center for American Progress, 2016), available at https://cdn.americanprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/31134245/UI_JSAreport.pdf.

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3 Wayne Vroman, "The Role of Unemployment Insurance as an Automatic Stabilizer During a Recession" (Washington: IMPAQ International, 2010), available at http://wdr.doleta.gov/research/FullText_Documents/ETAOP2010-10.pdf.

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7 West and others, "Strengthening Unemployment Protections in America."

8 Authors' calculations based on the most recent 12 months of regular UI continued weeks claimed and total unemployment data. As of 2015, 27.2 percent of unemployed workers nationwide claimed UI. However, UI served a lower share of unemployed workers—23.4 percent—if one counts only claims paid, discounting those who faced waiting weeks or claim denials. U.S. Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration, Report 5159, "Claims and Payment Activities," available at http://ows.doleta.gov/unemploy/DataDownloads.asp (last accessed March 2016).

9 Ibid.; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Labor Force Statistics from the Current Population Survey," Table A-1, available at http://www.bls.gov/webapps/legacy/cpsatab1.htm (last accessed March 2016).

10 Authors' calculations based on data from the U.S. Department of Labor, "ET Financial Data Handbook 394 -- FOREWORD," available at http://ows.doleta.gov/unemploy/hb394.asp (last accessed March 2016); U.S. Department of Labor, *State Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund Solvency Report* (2016), "Total Maximum Amount of Outstanding Advances, United States," available at http://www.ows.doleta.gov-/unemploy/docs/trustFundSolvReport2016.pdf.

11 Past experience demonstrates that governors' support can be instrumental in bringing about legislative changes in states' UI programs.

12 While the CAP, GCPI, and NELP proposal would provide an additional $1.68 billion per year for re-employment services and eligibility assessments, many states already supplement the federal funding they receive for re-employment services through so-called piggyback taxes and other measures. These strategies could be a way to fund re-employment services until Congress steps in. See National Association of State Workforce Agencies, "NASWA State Supplemental Funding Survey" (2015), available at https://www.naswa.org/assets/utilities/serve.cfm?gid=579A599C-9CEF-43E2-9764-575A05345585&dsp_meta=0.

13 To support the new federal requirement that states use their worker profiling models—statistical models that identify UI participants most likely to exhaust their benefits—to prioritize delivery of re-employment services, the U.S. Department of Labor has developed tools and resources for states. See, for example, Portia Wu, "Availability of Assistance Building Profiling Models to Identify Unemployment Insurance Claimants Most Likely to Exhaust Benefits" (Washington: U.S. Department of Labor, 2016), available at http://wdr.doleta.gov/directives/attach/TEN/TEN_37-15.pdf.

14 Neil Ridley and David Balducchi, "Work Sharing: An Alternative to Layoffs" (Washington: Center for Law and Social Policy, 2012), available at http://www.clasp.org/resources-and-publications/files/Work-Sharing-AnAlternative-to-Layoffs.pdf.

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17 U.S. Department of Labor, "Self-Employment Assistance," available at http://workforcesecurity.doleta.gov/unemploy/self.asp (last accessed January 2016).

18 Ibid.

19 U.S. Department of Labor, "Conformity Requirements for State UC Laws: Experience Rating," available at http://workforcesecurity.doleta.gov/unemploy/pdf/uilaws_exper_rating.pdf (last accessed June 2016).

20 U.S. Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration, "Significant Provisions of State Unemployment Insurance Laws, Effective January 2015," available at http://workforcesecurity.doleta.gov/unemploy/content/sigpros/2010-2019/January2015.pdf (last accessed December 2015).

21 Authors' calculations based on the most recent 12 months of data analyzed in Thomas Callan, Austin Nichols, and Stephan Lindner, "Unemployment Insurance Modernization and Eligibility" (Washington: Urban Institute, 2016), available at http://www.urban.org/research/publication/unemployment-insurance-modernization-and-eligibility. For further detail on estimates, see West and others, "Strengthening Unemployment Protections in America."

22 According to the authors' estimates, based on 2016 state minimum-wage rates, 24 states would see their minimum base period earnings requirements rise under the new federal standard.

23 In both instances, part-time work entails work for at least 20 hours per week.

24 This recommendation does not apply to educational employees.

25 U.S. Department of Labor, *Comparison of State Unemployment Laws, Chapter 3: Monetary Entitlement* (2015), available at http://www.unemploymentinsurance.doleta.gov/unemploy/pdf/uilawcompar/2015/monetary.pdf.

26 National Employment Law Project, "Unemployment Insurance Policy Advocate's Toolkit: Updating Partial Benefits to Encourage Work by Claimants and Fairness for PartTime Workers" (2015), available at http://www.nelp.org/content/uploads/1F-Updating-Partial-Benefits.pdf.

27 According to a recent report by the National Employment Law Project, state reforms have already helped curb misclassification abuses, which deprive workers of critical social insurance benefits and deprive states of payroll tax revenues that support programs such as UI. For a description of state best practices, see Sarah Leberstein and Catherine Ruckelshaus, "Independent Contractor vs. Employee: Why independent contractor misclassification matters and what we can do to stop it" (New York: National Employment Law Project, 2016), available at http://www.nelp.org/content/uploads/Policy-Brief-Independent-Contractor-vs-Employee.pdf. In multiple states—including New York and North Carolina—governors have issued executive orders to address misclassification. See, for example, Office of Gov. Pat McCrory, "Governor McCrory Signs Executive Order to Crack Down on Employee Misclassification," Press release, December 18, 2015, available at https://governor.nc.gov/press-release/governor-mccrory-signs-executive-order-crack-down-employee-misclassification; James A. Parrott, Testimony before the New York State Senate Standing Committee on Labor, January 13, 2010, available at http://www.fiscalpolicy.org/FPI_Testimony_MisclassificationStateSenate.pdf.

28 U.S. Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration, "Significant Provisions of State Unemployment Insurance Laws, Effective January 2015."

29 The high-quarter method generally yields the most adequate UI benefits of the four methods used by states to calculate claimants' weekly benefit amounts. U.S. Department of Labor, *Comparison of State Unemployment Laws, Chapter 3: Monetary Entitlement*.

30 Some types of job separations are already reported to government, such as those covered by the Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification, or WARN, Act, which requires midsize and large employers to provide most workers with 60 days' notice before a mass layoff or plant closing. See U.S. Department of Labor, "The Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification (WARN) Act Compliance Assistance Materials," available at https://www.doleta.gov/layoff/warn.cfm (last accessed April 2016).

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33 RESEAs refer to the combination of re-employment services—such as orientations, job counseling, job placement services and employer referrals, job search workshops, and education or training referrals—and eligibility assessments—in-person interviews that refer claimants to those re-employment services as needed. See U.S. Department of Labor, "Unemployment Insurance Program Letter No. 13-15" (2015), available at http://wdr.doleta.gov/directives/attach/UIPL/UIPL_13-15_Acc.pdf.

34 Boushey and Eizenga, "Toward a Strong Unemployment Insurance System."

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38 Periods of federal reimbursement occur when state and/or national unemployment rates are high or rising, with levels specified CAP, GCPI, and NELP's proposal. At these times, the Extended Benefits program, which provides additional weeks of unemployment benefits to the long-term unemployed and would be fully federally funded under the proposal, would be activated. See Section 1.3 of West and others, "Strengthening Unemployment Protections in America."

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