

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 9, 2012

The Honorable Hilda Solis
Secretary of Labor
200 Constitution Ave NW
Washington D.C. 20210

Dear Secretary Solis,

For many years now the nation has been suffering the effects of a long-lasting and painful recession. This recession has exploded public deficits, created historically high long-term unemployment and caused Americans to cut back on all but the most necessary expenses. For these families, who carefully consider every purchase, the continuous stream of stories highlighting waste, fraud and abuse in government programs is not an outrage, it is an insult.

Recently we learned that individuals have been able to defraud the Unemployment Insurance program to collect benefits while in prison. The L.A. Times reported the story of one such inmate who had managed to collect over \$30,000 in benefits while he was incarcerated. Stunningly he was able to have these checks deposited in his jail account from October 2008 to March 2010 without the state being aware and according to the story used the money to finance gang activities. Disturbingly the Los Angeles County District Attorney Steve Cooley stated that the state lacks "effective methods" to prevent such abuses. This fraud is not only an expense that we cannot afford but strikes at the viability of a social safety net that is crucial to the millions of unemployed Americans.

Last year, the Federal Government spent \$85.4 billion on unemployment compensation, including \$5.5 billion to help states administer the program. Given the scale of the resources invested, the Department of Labor and state governments must work together to ensure that federal funds are spent appropriately.

A convicted murderer receiving unemployment benefits while in prison is completely unacceptable and we would like to know how your Department plans to address the practice. As public servants we have a duty to be wise stewards of tax dollars and when we fail in that charge we undermine the trust of our constituents in government as a whole. We are confident that "effective methods" can be put in place that will prevent those serving time from continuing their criminal career at the expense of those struggling to find work across the United States.

Sincerely,



JEFF DENHAM
Member of Congress



HOWARD P. "BUCK" MCKEON
Member of Congress

Additional Signatures

Ed Royce

ED ROYCE
Member of Congress

Dana Rohrabacher

DANA ROHRBACHER
Member of Congress

Dan Lungren

DAN LUNGREN
Member of Congress

Brian Bilbray

BRIAN BILBRAY
Member of Congress

Ken Calvert

KEN CALVERT
Member of Congress

Trey Gowdy

TREY GOWDY
Member of Congress

Trent Franks

TRENT FRANKS
Member of Congress

Walter B. Jones

WALTER JONES
Member of Congress

Renee Ellmers

RENEE ELLMERS
Member of Congress

Dan Burton

DAN BURTON
Member of Congress

Lynn Westmoreland

LYNN WESTMORELAND
Member of Congress

Bill Johnson

BILL JOHNSON
Member of Congress

Mary Bono Mack

MARY BONO MACK
Member of Congress

Wally Herger

WALLY HERGER
Member of Congress

Billy Long

BILLY LONG
Member of Congress

cc: The Honorable Edmund Brown, Governor of California