

Reality in NC Today: 70,000 Lose Unemployment

Written by Steve Frank
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Today, some 70,000 North Carolinians lose their unemployment benefits, as state lawmakers chose not to accept federal assistance to continue extended benefits that could have been extended through the end of the year—that after they cut benefit amounts earlier in the year. The end of extended benefits come as many are seeking any kind of work, displaced from even higher salaried positions, such as Nicole Feig, who said, “I was at like 53-thousand a year, and now I’m looking for jobs for 12 dollars an hour just to pay my utilities.” And Feig says she is falling beyond any financial safety net, “I had to cash in all my 401(k)’s and don’t have anything. I don’t have any equity in my house. I have nothing. I have nowhere to go. I’m going to be homeless.” The cut-off of extended funds means more people will be seeking basic living help from community action agencies, already stretched from the federal sequestration and more people in need, according to Sharon Goodson of the North Carolina Action agency, “The new unemployment law in North Carolina coupled with sequestration equals a nightmare for low-income people across North Carolina.” Some lawmakers in North Carolina's General Assembly are criticizing decisions by the Republican-led legislature and Gov. Pat McCrory that today cut off the federal unemployment extension, State Democratic Party leaders last Wednesday failing in their try to force a vote on legislation to postpone cuts to state unemployment benefits. The state cuts now in effect will eventually effect about another 100,000 more by the end of the year—170,000 total.