#### Obama’s pc is key- he has to overcome GOP opposition in house and senate

Epstein 1/7 (Reid J, writer for politico, “Obama hits House GOP on unemployment benefits,” Politico,

http://www.politico.com/story/2014/01/obama-unemployment-benefits-101841.html)

President Barack Obama has the fight he wants. Minutes after winning a key Senate vote on the three-month extension of unemployment insurance, Obama teed up the forthcoming battle with House Republicans. Obama called for swift action from Congress, making a direct pitch to an unfriendly House to take up a vote Speaker John Boehner said will not happen unless the $6.5 billion benefit is paid for. (Also on POLITICO: In surprise move, jobless benefits advance) “We’ve got to get this across the finish line without obstruction or delay,” Obama said. “And we need the House of Representatives to be able to vote for it as well.” He also blasted Sen. Rand Paul’s contention that extending unemployment benefits “saps” people’s desire to work. “I really want to go at this for a second,” Obama said to applause. “That really sells the American people short. I meet a lot of people as president of the United States and as a candidate for president of the United States. … I meet a lot of people. And I can’t, I can’t name a time where I met an American who would rather have an unemployment check than the pride of having a job.” (Also on POLITICO: Big chill buffets Beltway) Flanked by 18 people the White House said either lost their unemployment benefits when the federal program expired after Christmas or have benefited from the program in the past, Obama thanked the Senate which, with the help of six Republicans, voted Tuesday morning to allow debate to proceed on the bill. “Voting for unemployment insurance helps people and creates jobs,” he said. “Voting against it does not.” For weeks Obama and the White House blamed Republicans for the expiration of long-term unemployment benefits, but the strategy appeared in jeopardy before six GOP senators voted to begin debate on a three-month extension. GOP lawmakers have demanded the $6.5 billion benefit be paid for. (Also on POLITICO: Coburn slams jobless benefits 'spin') Roadblocks still remain. The bill must get 60 votes again in the Senate to end debate, which is no guarantee. Last year for instance, the Senate began debate on legislation to expand background checks for gun purchases before failing to reach 60 votes to end debate. Obama said Congress has an obligation both to help struggling Americans. Doing so would also keep the nation’s fragile economy afloat, he said. Obama spent part of Monday phoning Republican senators to try to get 60 votes for cloture on the Senate’s three-month extension of unemployment benefits. On Tuesday six GOP senators voted to allow debate: Kelly Ayotte of New Hampshire, Dan Coats of Indiana, Susan Collins of Maine, Lisa Murkowski of Alaska, Rob Portman of Ohio and the bill’s co-sponsor, Dean Heller of Nevada. More than 1.3 million people lost unemployment benefits Dec. 28, the White House said, and more than 70,000 will be tossed off the federal benefit roll each week if the program is not extended. Should the bill pass the Senate, it faces tough opposition in the House, where Speaker John Boehner (R-Ohio) has said he will not consider the unemployment benefit extension if it is not paid for. Boehner reiterated Tuesday that House GOP leadership requires any unemployment extension to be paid for. “One month ago I personally told the White House that another extension of temporary emergency unemployment benefits should not only be paid for but include something to help put people back to work,” Boehner said in a statement released by his office. “To date, the president has offered no such plan. If he does, I’ll be happy to discuss it, but right now the House is going to remain focused on growing the economy and giving America’s unemployed the independence that only comes from finding a good job.” Democrats and the White House have argued paying for the benefit extension is unnecessary because the money will be immediately pumped back into the economy. Under President George W. Bush, chief White House economic adviser Gene Sperling said Monday, emergency unemployment benefits were extended five times without pay-fors. If Congress does not extend unemployment benefits, the White House has said, it would cost American economy 240,000 jobs in 2014 alone. Obama’s remarks serve as the high point of what the White House and its progressive allies have said will be a week of applying pressure to Republicans to extend unemployment benefits. Obama’s political arm, Organizing for Action, announced events across the country Tuesday and other labor groups are mounting campaigns to call Congress.

#### Obama’s political capital is key to getting republicans on board

Bohan 12/30 (Caren, Reuters, “Obama, Democrats push for extension of unemployment benefits,” https://bangordailynews.com/2013/12/30/politics/obama-democrats-push-for-extension-of-unemployment-benefits/)

WASHINGTON — On the eve of the expiration of federal benefits for the long-term unemployed, President Barack Obama and his Democratic allies are stepping up pressure on Republicans to renew the program.¶ Top White House economic adviser Gene Sperling said in a statement issued on Friday that a failure to renew emergency jobless benefits would harm the economy and he urged Congress to move quickly to pass a short-term extension of the aid.¶ Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, a Democrat, has vowed to bring to a vote a bill extending federal unemployment insurance benefits as soon as Congress returns from its holiday recess on Jan. 6.¶ “While we remain disappointed that Congress did not heed the president’s call to extend emergency unemployment benefits for next year before the holidays, the president as well as the Democratic congressional leadership have made clear the importance of extending the benefits immediately upon Congress’s return,” Sperling said in a statement.¶ Sperling, director of the White House National Economic Council, endorsed legislation introduced by Sen. Jack Reed, D-RI, and Dean Heller, R-Nev., that would extend the unemployment benefits for three months. He said passage of the temporary bill would allow time to consider an extension for all of 2014.¶ Without an extension, some 1.3 million unemployed Americans are scheduled to lose their federal jobless benefits on Saturday.¶ Under an emergency program created during President George W. Bush’s administration in 2008, federal benefits kick in for Americans who have exhausted their state unemployment benefits. In many states, unemployment benefits run out after 26 weeks.¶ The federal jobless aid has been renewed every year since 2008. Many Republicans oppose an extension of jobless benefits, arguing the program was always intended to be temporary. They have also said an extension would add to the federal deficit unless it is offset by spending elsewhere in the budget.

#### Obama’s backing is key to a deal

Schroeder 12-27 (Peter, The Hill, Pelosi: End of jobless aid 'simply immoral', <http://thehill.com/blogs/on-the-money/economy/194052-pelosi-blasts-immoral-end-to-jobless-benefits>)

Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nev.) said he plans to bring up an extension as his first order of business in 2014, but some Republicans have indicated they would only be willing to extend the program if the cost of another extension is offset elsewhere. The emergency federal benefits were first put in place during the 2008 recession, and Congress has opted extending them repeatedly since then. The program allows the federal government to help states provide much longer unemployment benefits than normally permitted, running up to 73 weeks so long as people are looking for work. But with the extended benefits headed for a Saturday expiration, roughly 1.3 million unemployed Americans will immediately lose those benefits, while millions more could lose benefits throughout 2014 if they are not extended. Some Republicans, including Sen. Rand Paul (Ky.), have opposed another extension, arguing the economy has recovered enough to end the emergency lifeline. Other GOP lawmakers have not said they would oppose an extension, but are concerned about the roughly $26 billion cost of extending the program for another year. Pelosi has said she does not believe that cost has to be offset, arguing the program does more good for the economy than it costs. President Obama has also called on Congress to extend the benefits, while Speaker John Boehner (R-Ohio) has said he is willing to consider a specific proposal if the president offers it.