Biden team divided over end of jobless aid

Some advisors see harm in cutoff, but president says it is "appropriate."

by Jay Strick

Biden administration officials have been at odds over the consequence of allowing unemployment benefits to expire at the end of the week, with numerous White House economic advisors influenced by Jared Bernstein, a member of President Joe Biden's Economic Policy Council, and the Labor Department—both of whom believe the benefits cutoff could serve as a danger signal to millions of Americans who remain out of work, according to two sources familiar with the matter.

In private conversations, some officials across multiple parts of the government—including the White House National Economic Council, the White House Council of Economic Advisors, the Treasury Department, and the Budget—have both favored and opposed the cutoff.

The final decision will be up to Biden, the sources said.

In conversations with administration officials, the president said the cutoff presents an opportunity to gain support for a plan that would increase benefits to $400 a week for those out of work, according to one source.

The Labor Department, which oversees unemployment insurance programs, has been in frequent contact with a team of White House economic advisors.

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