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COBRA Premium Assistance Deadline Extended to March 31

Notably absent from the HIRE Act is any extension of the period for qualifying for COBRA premium assistance under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, which ended on February 28. But on March 2, President Obama signed the Temporary Extension Act of 2010 (Pub. L. No. 111-144).

The Act extends the deadline for involuntary terminations qualifying for COBRA premium assistance for one month, to March 31, 2010, and extends emergency unemployment benefits as well. The Act also provides COBRA premium assistance to employees who became eligible for COBRA health care continuation because of a reduction in hours and then are involuntarily terminated on or after the Act's March 2 enactment date. Further extensions are now being discussed on Capitol Hill.