



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Suzi Oppenheimer

Senator Oppenheimer Votes to Provide New Yorkers 13 Weeks of Extended Unemployment Benefits

SUZI OPPENHEIMER May 18, 2009

Bill is Expected to Head to the Floor for Vote by Full Senate This Week

Senator Suzi Oppenheimer (D-Mamaroneck), a member of the Senate Finance Committee, voted to approve legislation (S. 4110-A) that would permit New York to receive more than \$600 million in federal stimulus funds for unemployment assistance. As part of this bill, an additional 13 weeks of extended unemployment benefits will be provided to New Yorkers already receiving aid, while additional funding will be made available for benefits to newly unemployed workers.

“I am pleased to support this legislation, which will provide critical financial assistance to jobless New Yorkers during this particularly difficult time,” said Senator Oppenheimer. “As we struggle with persistent unemployment throughout the State, the bill will help to ensure that workers receive the assistance they need to purchase food, pay their bills and provide for their basic needs.” In all, the extended benefits will aid some 120,000 jobless workers now receiving unemployment assistance.

The 13 weeks of extended unemployment benefits will be funded under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA, also known as the “federal stimulus plan”). Under the legislation, some \$600 million in federal stimulus funds will be used to help stabilize New

York's Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund, which had become insolvent under the growing burden of the current economic downturn. In order to qualify for federal support, New York needed to conform its state unemployment law to ARRA requirements for individuals who must leave jobs for compelling family reasons, such as domestic violence or the illness or disability of an immediate family member. All of these compelling reasons have long been recognized under New York case law and statutes and the legislation does not create any new grounds for benefit eligibility.

S.4110-A was passed by the Senate Labor Committee on April 20th. With unanimous passage of the bill by the Finance Committee, the bill is expected to be voted on by the full Senate sometime this week. A comparable bill is under consideration in the State Assembly. "With growing numbers of jobless residents in New York," said Senator Oppenheimer, "I eagerly await final passage of the bill by the Legislature and its approval by Governor Paterson."