



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Malcolm Smith

## Senate Passes Critical Legislation to Protect Unemployed New Yorkers

MALCOLM A. SMITH May 19, 2009

### *Senate Passes Legislation to Aid Unemployed As Tens of Thousands Face Loss of Benefits*

Today, the Senate passed critical legislation (S.4110-A) that will provide an additional 13 weeks of extended benefits to nearly 120,000 currently unemployed New Yorkers. This legislation comes at a time when our economy is struggling, as Senate Majority Leader Malcolm A. Smith and his colleagues are working to turn the economy around and help people find new, fair paying jobs.

Presently, unemployment benefits for approximately 56,000 jobless New York residents are set to expire starting this week; nearly 5,000 people will lose benefits every week over the next 2-3 months.

“As we work to restore the economy we inherited, it is programs like this that will make the greatest difference in getting New York’s economy back on track,” said **Senate Majority Leader Smith**. “Today, our conference demonstrated our commitment to restoring the economy through sound economic investment and development. I am pleased that this Federal Stimulus money will be going to New Yorkers who need it the most, and believe that it will serve as an efficient and successful way to expedite economic recovery.”

**State Senator George Onorato (D-Queens)** , Chair of the Senate's Labor Committee and the bill's lead sponsor said, "Passage of this legislation will provide unemployed New Yorkers with critically needed financial assistance during very difficult economic times. This is a win-win for unemployed workers in need of aid, as well as for local economies that will benefit from the money these New Yorkers will spend on food, rent and other basic needs in their communities. Ultimately, this legislation will provide desperately needed relief for 120,000 job-seeking New Yorkers who are in danger of losing unemployment benefits that they need to stay afloat and off of public assistance, and it will also provide funding to support new unemployment claims. I am delighted that this legislation has been passed by the Senate, and I look forward to its being signed into law by Governor Paterson in the very near future."

New York will receive more than \$645 million through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, funding that will be used to extend unemployment benefits for an additional 13 weeks to those currently unemployed. Additionally, Federal Stimulus dollars will also stabilize New York's Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund, which pays out all benefits for unemployed workers.

Because of the rising unemployment rates, with more than 160,000 jobs lost in the last year alone, that fund has been running in deficit since January of this year.

"During these difficult economic times, working families are struggling to make ends meet," stated **Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins (D-Yonkers)** . "For the unemployed, the struggle is even greater, therefore, I was pleased to vote in favor of this important bill that will help so many of New York's families."

"Extending unemployment benefits provides a critical life-line to workers and families fighting to survive this economic crisis," said **Senator Brian X. Foley (D-Blue Point)**.

"Supporting recently unemployed individuals during a very challenging period is not only

the right thing to do, it also helps stabilize our economy,” said Foley, who serves on the Senate Economic Development Committee.

“We know that the state and nation’s economic recovery will be a slow process,” said **Senator William T. Stachowski (D-C-Lake View)**. “Many people who have lost their jobs are going to run out of unemployment benefits before they can find work again. This legislation recognizes that the search for employment is going to take people longer in this struggling economy and that they need a safety net to help buy them more time. The money will be an immediate lifeline for 56,000 New Yorkers whose benefits were set to run out this week. By providing an additional 13 weeks of benefits, we can hopefully help these families stay afloat until they can find work again. I am pleased that this bill also addresses the concerns of the business community. We wanted to make sure that this extension did not leave our businesses with future financial impediments. I believe this plan will be good for workers, business and the state’s tax revenues.”

**Senator Diane Savino (D-Brooklyn/Staten Island)**, Chair of the Senate Committee on Civil Service & Pensions said, “The passage of today’s legislation, extending unemployment benefits, will help the thousands of individuals who are struggling to find a job in today’s difficult job market. It will also help stimulate the economy by putting cash directly into the pockets of New Yorkers, who will, in turn, spend it on items such as groceries, transportation, and clothing.”

**Senator David Valesky (D-Oneida)**, Vice President Pro Tempore of the Senate said, “We are facing an unprecedented national economic crisis which has resulted in job loss for more than a hundred thousand hard-working New Yorkers. This legislation, using federal stimulus funds, provides additional support for those in need while we move toward economic recovery.”