



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Craig M. Johnson

## State Senate Extends COBRA Healthcare Benefits

CRAIG M. JOHNSON August 3, 2009

### Extends Health Insurance Coverage From 18 to 36 Months

The New York State Senate recently passed legislation (S5471) that will protect unemployed workers by extending their health insurance benefits from 18 months to 36 months, Senator Craig M. Johnson, (D-Nassau), announced.

"In this current economic climate, it is more important than ever to alleviate some of the stress felt by families facing unemployment," Senator Johnson said. "This legislation will ensure that hard working New Yorkers that have lost their jobs recently through no fault of their own can continue to have access to their healthcare during this transitional period."

Additionally, under the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA), recently unemployed New Yorkers who were working at small businesses are eligible for these extended benefits.

Previously, companies with fewer than 20 employees were not eligible for COBRA once they became unemployed, leaving thousands of citizens without the coverage they need to get back on their feet.

Earlier this session, Senate Democrats passed legislation that protects New Yorkers by allowing those who have recently lost their job to retain their health coverage at 65 percent discount of the continuation premium.