

## 6/12/2008- Congressman Sires Backs Legislation to Extend Benefits for the Unemployed

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For immediate release

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Recently, the nation experienced the biggest one-month jump in the unemployment rate in more than two decades, rising from 5.0 percent to 5.5 percent and is now an entire percentage point higher than a year ago. Americans have been losing jobs in each of the past five months, with the number of unemployed now at 3.8 million. The airline and automobile industries alone have laid off over 50,000 employees combined. "The current high levels of unemployment have only added to the struggles of the U.S. economy by thousands more Americans to those having a hard time making ends meet," stated Congressman Sires.

H.R. 5749 will provide a temporary 13 week extension of unemployment benefits to all states that exhaust the 26 weeks of regular unemployment benefits. This bill will also provide an additional 13 weeks for states whose unemployment rate is higher than six percent. The extended benefits will be provided through March 2009 and, according to the Congressional Budget Office, would benefit 3.8 million Americans.

H.R. 5749 is necessary to provide our economy with the relief it needs. Extending these benefits is an efficient and quick way to support our country's workers and invigorate the economy. "My Democratic colleagues and I are committed to providing the much needed relief to the millions of unemployed workers, whom in the face of rising gas and food costs continue to struggle to support themselves and their families," concluded Congressman Sires.

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