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Legislation Passed by the Democratic Congress Will Provide Much-Needed Relief

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Today, Rep. Doris Matsui (CA-05) announced that the extended unemployment benefits passed by the Democratic Congress are already reaching Californians. Since November 2006, over 150,000 people in the state of California have exhausted their regular benefits and remain unemployed. It is estimated that nearly half a million more people will exhaust their regular benefits by early 2009.

"Hard-working men and women are struggling in light of the current economic turmoil. With the skyrocketing cost of gas and groceries, American families need relief. We need to do more to help those who have lost their jobs in an economy on the brink of recession," said Rep. Matsui.

Americans across the country are facing rising costs of living-and we have just seen the largest monthly increase in unemployment in 20 years. For the fifth straight month, the economy lost jobs and unemployment rose from 5.0 percent in April to 5.5 percent in May. The economy has lost nearly 325,000 jobs this year and 8.5 million Americans are unemployed.

In Sacramento, the unemployment level hovers above six percent. The bill will benefit well over 600,000 people in California and 3.8 million unemployed people across the country. It provides up to 13 weeks of extended unemployment benefits in every state to workers exhausting the 26 weeks of regular unemployment benefits.

"Extending unemployment benefits is one of the most cost-effective and fast-acting ways to stimulate the economy. We must keep fighting to turn our economy around and lend temporary relief to hard-working families in need while we find comprehensive solutions to stabilize our economy in the future," said Rep. Matsui.

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