



February 12, 2009

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Dear Representative:

On behalf of the 1.6 million members of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), I strongly urge you to vote in support of the conference report for H.R. 1, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. At a time when national unemployment has risen to 7.6 %, this bill is sorely needed to create and save millions of jobs and offer a lifeline to unemployed workers and families hardest hit by this recession.

We support the core provisions of the conference report which provide relief for states and local governments through increased federal support for Medicaid, education, child care, child support enforcement, employment services and job training, public health, transportation, public infrastructure and other essential services. We also support the extension of assistance to unemployed workers through an expansion of the unemployment benefits program and continued health care coverage. The agreement also provides needed investments to help our economy over the long run through increased spending in health care information technology, prevention and wellness programs, energy efficiency and infrastructure.

The provisions to aid states are particularly important for our nation's economy and the well being of our communities. As state revenues plummet and 46 states are in fiscal crisis, states are being forced to consider cuts in spending for jobs and important public services. Such cuts put a brake on economic growth and weaken public support systems at the time when Americans need more help to weather the recession. The conference agreement provides a potent and proven way to save and create jobs through increased support for state Medicaid programs and grants to states, cities and counties.

It is imperative that Congress not delay and approve this conference agreement. Our nation is facing the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression. All sectors of the economy are hurting and working families are struggling to keep their homes, feed their families, pay their bills and get the health care they need should they fall ill. This economic crisis has spread from Wall Street to Main Street to State Capitol buildings and city halls. In the strongest terms we can express, we urge you to pass this economic recovery package.

Sincerely,

GERALD W. McENTEE
International President

GWMcE:lb:gm

American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, AFL-CIO

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