

Washington, DC (December 8, 2011) – As the House prepares to debate end-of-the-year legislation, including a proposal to extend unemployment benefits for a year, Rep. Gus Bilirakis (FL-09) wants to ensure that any proposal also strengthens the program, and that it is viable for those who truly need it and does not reward those who act irresponsibly.

In May, Bilirakis introduced H.R. 2001, which would prevent the payment of unemployment compensation to individuals fired for drug or alcohol use. South Carolina expects to [save nearly \\$30 million a year](#) because it recently began denying benefits to people who had been fired for gross misconduct such as drug and alcohol use.

"Allowing people who willfully violate the law and workplace policy to collect unemployment benefits, which are funded by federal and state tax dollars, is fiscally irresponsible, especially when so many have fallen on tough times through no fault of their own," Bilirakis said.

Because of differing standards throughout the country, there often is lax treatment of those who are discharged for drug or alcohol use when they apply for unemployment insurance benefits.