

Rep. Bilirakis: Stimulus Package will Help Millions

WASHINGTON (29 Jan.) -- U.S. Rep. Gus M. Bilirakis joined with an overwhelming majority of the House of Representatives in passing a \$146 billion economic stimulus package (H.R. 5140) that would give rebates of \$600 and \$1,200 to more than 117 million taxpayers, while providing businesses with incentives to boost investment and job creation.

"The legislation passed today will provide immediate relief for millions of Americans, and spur both businesses and consumers to contribute to the sustained growth of our economy," said Rep. Bilirakis.

"I am encouraged by the bipartisan manner in which this legislation was passed, and I call on the Senate to move this bill as quickly as possible in order to get it to the President's desk and signed into law. The economic slowdown and difficulties faced by American consumers businesses are mounting, and immediate action is key for this stimulus to work."

H.R. 5140, the Recovery Rebates and Economic Stimulus for the American People Act of 2008, is now bound for the Senate where it faces an uncertain future, due to changes desired by many Senators. As passed by the House, H.R. 5140 provides for the following:

Rebate: The bill provides a rebate for filers who qualify in one of two categories: the greater of a) filers paying income taxes in 2007 (with a maximum refund of \$600 for individuals and \$1,200 for joint filers); or b) for filers who earned at least \$3,000 or paid at least \$1 in federal income tax in 2007 (\$300 flat amount for individuals and \$600 for joint-filers).

Rebates are phased out at a rate of \$50 per \$1,000 of Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) starting at \$75,000 (AGI) for individuals and \$150,000 (AGI) for joint-filers.

Children's Bonus: All those who qualify for a rebate will receive an additional \$300 for each qualifying child. There is no limit to the number of child bonuses a family can receive.

Section 179 Expensing: The bill increases to \$250,000 (from \$125,000) the total amount of new and used property, for up to \$800,000 of property place in service, that qualified businesses can expense under section 179 of the tax code. Most of the businesses that qualify under Section 179 are small businesses.

Bonus Depreciation: The bill includes a bonus depreciation tax cut for businesses, allowing them to write off 50% of investment spending on new equipment.

Housing GSE and FHA Loan Limits: The bill increases loan limits for the Federal Housing Administration, allowing the FHA to insure loans of up to 125 percent of the median price in the area, with a maximum of \$729,750. The current loan limit is \$362,000. The bill also increases loan limits for Government Sponsored Entities (i.e. Fannie Mae, Freddie Mac) from \$417,000 to 125 percent of the median price in the area, with a limit of \$729,000. Both increases would expire at the end of 2008.