

Gus Urges Action on Economic Stimulus

On Friday, Gus sent a letter to the House Ways and Means Committee Chairman Charles Rangel (D-N.Y.) urging him to include proposals Bilirakis has made in economic stimulus legislation now making its way through Congress:

"I am heartened that President-Elect Obama has called for bipartisanship as the development of economic stimulus legislation proceeds through Congress and I am encouraged that he has expressed his desire to provide substantial tax relief as part of this proposal." The letter said. "I believe my ideas should be part of any bipartisan effort to strengthen the economy."

H.R. 308, the Hurricane and Tornado Mitigation Investment Act, would provide tax incentives for home and business owners to weather-proof their homes and businesses to better withstand hurricane and tornado force winds and water intrusion. The bill allows a tax credit up to 25 percent, not to exceed \$5,000, to defray the costs of specified improvements. Enactment of this bill will help create jobs in an industry that has experienced significant downturns while reducing loss of life and property damage that has driven-up insurance rates and depressed housing sales in Florida.

H.R. 309, The American Heroes' Homeownership Assistance Act, would provide current and former service members who were deployed to a combat zone since 2001, including spouses of soldiers killed in action, with a one-time tax credit toward the purchase of a primary residence up to 10 percent of the purchase price, or \$7,500.

"Taken together, these two measures will help create jobs, encourage home sales, save lives, and immediately inject needed funds into the economy, goals on which I hope we can all agree," said Bilirakis. "I respectfully believe that these proposals can obtain bipartisan support and will help get our economy moving in the right direction."

Bilirakis added, "I hope that our incoming President and House Democratic leaders are willing to follow through on promises of bipartisanship and will carefully consider these ideas."

The Tampa Bay Business Journal has more:

Just a few days into the 111th session of Congress, the Tampa Bay area's contingent is promoting legislation aimed at assisting the local economy.

Rep. Gus Bilirakis (R-Palm Harbor) sent a letter to House Ways and Means Committee Chairman Charles Rangel on Jan. 9 asking him to consider H.R. 308, the Hurricane and Tornado Mitigation Investment Act, which would provide tax incentives to business owners and homeowners to weatherproof their properties. The tax incentives could result in jobs created in sectors that assist with these improvements.

Charles Richards, license holder of All Area Roofing Inc., a Tampa company that does re-roofing, repairs and waterproofing, said he would support legislation such as H.R. 308. After the hurricanes of 2004, insurance rates and taxes have increased, and in the current economic situation, people can no longer afford the rates, said Richards.

"People are putting buckets in their houses. They're just trying to wing it. You can't blame them really, it's going to be tough," he said.