



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Craig M. Johnson

## Senator Johnson Votes to Protect Unemployed New Yorkers During Economic Crisis

CRAIG M. JOHNSON May 20, 2009

The New York State Senate passed legislation (S.4110-A) that will provide an additional 13 weeks of extended benefits to nearly 120,000 currently unemployed New Yorkers, Senator Craig M. Johnson announced.

“This is a much-needed life preserver for the thousands of residents across Long Island and New York state that have been victimized by this worldwide economic crisis,” Senator Johnson said. “As we work to get New York back on the right track, this measure will provide additional help to families and communities that have been touched by this downturn.”

Unemployment benefits for approximately 56,000 jobless New York residents were set to expire last week and nearly 5,000 people were slated to lose their benefits every week during the next two to three months.

New York State will receive more than \$645 million through the American Recovery and

Reinvestment Act of 2009, funding that will be used to extend unemployment benefits for an additional 13 weeks to those currently unemployed. Additionally, federal stimulus dollars will also stabilize New York's Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund, which pays out all benefits for unemployed workers.

Because of the rising unemployment rates, with more than 160,000 jobs lost in the last year alone, that fund has been running in deficit since January of this year.

The legislation has also been passed by the Assembly and signed by the governor.

In March, the Senate and Assembly passed legislation that allowed unemployed workers to maintain health insurance at a sharply discounted rate. Under the measure, those who were laid off between Sept.1, 2008 and December 31, 2009 would be eligible to have 65 percent of federal COBRA premiums paid for by funding provided through the federal American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.