



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Shirley L. Huntley

Senate Insurance Committee Votes to Extend COBRA Benefits

SHIRLEY L. HUNTLEY June 2, 2009

| ISSUE: **HEALTH, INSURANCE**

| COMMITTEE: **INSURANCE**

Extends Health Insurance Coverage From 18 to 36 Months.

(Albany, NY)-Today Senator Shirley L. Huntley (D- Jamaica) announced that the New York State Senate passed S.5471 through the Insurance Committee, legislation that will protect workers who have lost their jobs in today's economic downturn by ensuring that their health insurance coverage is extended from 18 to 36 months.

This legislation makes sure that small businesses are also eligible for Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA) coverage by allowing all workers—regardless of the size of their employer to be covered—by extended health care benefits. Under current law companies who have less than 20 employees are not eligible for COBRA.

“New York’s unemployed workers deserve protection, and we must assure them that they will have health insurance coverage while in a transitional period.,” said Senator Huntley.

“An increasing number of workers are experiencing extended periods of job loss or are being forced to work part-time. These individuals if they worked for a company large enough to be eligible for COBRA would only be covered for 18 months or not covered at all. Experiencing unemployment can be a very stressful time for not only the unemployed person but the entire family. This bill will help to alleviate the worry about health care coverage.”

Always fighting for affordable healthcare, Senator Huntley noted that this legislation will help many, who have lost their jobs recently through no fault of their own, to continue accessing health care and be able to concentrate on getting back to work.