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To: Lashway, Lisa
Subject: Congressman Rodney Frelinghuysen's e-Newsletter

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Our Top Priority

Rep. Frelinghuysen's Op-ed appeared in the February 2, 2009 edition of the Morris County Daily Record:

The headlines say it all: "Economic Signs Turn from Grim to Worse." Government data indicates that the economy shrank at its fastest pace in nearly 27 years in the fourth quarter of 2008, sinking deeper into recession as consumers and business cut spending.

As if we needed it, there was no clearer evidence that "jump-starting" the economy by creating jobs, must be Congress' top priority.

I commend President Barack Obama for his immediate focus. Families and businesses everywhere are struggling against a backdrop of surging unemployment, budget deficits, and foreclosures, Congress must work with his Administration to restore confidence in our economy.

We have a responsibility to respond by passing an economic stimulus package that is effective, efficient, and timely. Unfortunately, the massive \$819 billion stimulus package (over \$1 trillion if you count the interest future generations will pay for this borrowed money) approved by the House last week is just the opposite: ineffective, inefficient, and absolutely not an intelligent way to use taxpayers' dollars.

Our goal must be to enact a stimulus package that creates jobs quickly! However, according to the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office, less than half of the nearly one trillion dollars in this legislation will actually be spent in the next two years! At that rate, an economic recovery would probably outrun this government spending.

From the beginning, the stimulus package has been characterized as a transportation and infrastructure investment package. Clearly it is not! Only \$30 billion, or a mere three percent, of the funding is directed toward "shovel ready" road, highway, and transportation projects that would immediately create jobs.

Americans should be worried about this package and not simply because of how long it will take to actually spend the money. The legislation was the product of Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Majority Leader Reid Harry Reid with virtually no input from the minority or even most members of their own party! Frankly, the Congressional leaders are acting in an incredibly irresponsible manner, throwing in billions of extra dollars of non-stimulus social spending. Let's be clear, this extraneous spending does nothing to create jobs or prevent layoffs. To cite just a few examples:

- \$79 billion for a State Stabilization Fund to bail out some states that have done little or nothing to control their own spending or debt;
- \$6.2 billion for weatherization programs, 31 times the \$200 million budgeted last year;
- \$600 million for new cars for government workers;
- \$400 million for global warming research;
- \$335 million for sexually transmitted disease education and prevention programs;

- \$136 billion for 32 entirely new government programs, 600,000 new government jobs;

Equally disturbing is that some states plan to use funds provided to them, not as a job creator, but as a budget balancer. Maryland and Virginia officials recently declared that if they receive funding for bridge and road projects, they will pull their own funding from these areas to close unrelated budget gaps. How does this fiscal "sleight of hand" create private sector jobs? Can New Jersey be far behind?

If we allow this to happen, it means we are ignoring the lessons of the controversial economic rescue plan passed last fall. At that time, we were promised proper management and accountability of taxpayer money. Unfortunately, we got neither. This stimulus package sends us down the same wasteful road. Congress must learn from the mistakes of last year's rescue plan and put real accountability into the legislation and real consequences for cheating the process or "gaming the system."


American families and businesses should demand a responsible and effective economic stimulus package, one that creates real jobs without including Nancy Pelosi's extraneous non-stimulus spending.

For his part, and to his credit, the President told House Republicans this week that he is eager to consider our ideas. As the Senate begins to consider its version of the stimulus plan this week, I hope the President will listen when we ask for more pro-growth tax cuts, better targeting of this bill's spending, and far more accountability.

In the weeks ahead, Congress and the White House have the opportunity to improve this package. We cannot fail. We must not waste this precious opportunity to "jump-start" the economy. It's our top priority!

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