



Assembly Member **SANDRÉ SWANSON**

News Release

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Swanson Promotes Enhanced Unemployment Insurance Plan To Save Jobs, Ease Burden On Workers In Transition

(Sacramento) – Assemblymember Sandré R. Swanson (D-Alameda), Chair of the Labor and Employment Committee, joined **Speaker Karen Bass**, **Senate President Pro Tem Darrell Steinberg**, and other Democratic lawmakers to unveil an enhanced unemployment insurance plan that would help stimulate the economy while bringing in over \$900 million dollars in Federal economic stimulus funds.

“This recession is about jobs. The enhanced unemployment insurance we propose will give those in search of work the right to earn additional resources that will help keep them and their family afloat. This also helps them continue to contribute to the economy, and any time we do that, we save jobs,” Assemblymember Swanson announced.

Proposed Federal legislation, known as the Unemployment Insurance Modernization Act, will create incentives for states to modernize their unemployment insurance programs. That law would provide California with \$903 million in Federal funds, provided the State meets certain requirements. The proposal revealed today would amend California’s unemployment insurance laws to meet the eligibility standards necessary to access the funds.

“By aligning our standards to those set out by the Federal government, we would not only become eligible for over \$900 million in Federal Funds, we would help approximately 64,500 additional workers annually who are now falling through the cracks of the current unemployment program. This would provide about \$152 million in unemployment benefits each year, or an average of \$2,357 per unemployed worker. This is a win-win situation for our economy and for working families,” Assemblymember Swanson contended.

Additionally, the Democratic proposal would allow some “under-employed” workers, i.e. those with only part-time jobs, to draw full unemployment insurance without penalty. Currently, earnings over \$25 per week reduce unemployment benefits by an equal amount. Under the new proposal, workers could earn up to \$200 per week without losing any benefits.

“Unemployment insurance only pays up to 50% of an employee’s previous earnings. In these difficult times, many people face the incredibly difficult challenge of finding a full time job on a reduced income while attempting to support their family. Allowing people to work part-time not only eases this problem, but also helps keep local economies going. More importantly, remaining in the workforce, even part-time, is key to securing full-time employment in many sectors,” Assemblymember Swanson added.

“Economists from all over the political spectrum have made it clear that if the people are not working, they cannot participate as consumers, and consumers drive our economy. If California is going to recover, then we must have a stimulus package that helps those who are seeking work. This package does just that,” Assemblymember Swanson concluded.

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