Like many of you, our family has experienced consequences from the falling values of our savings and home. As we plan to send our oldest daughter to college in the fall, we know we will have to save and borrow more for tuition to cover what we have lost in the market. Across the district, rising unemployment has increased economic anxiety, and businesses are struggling to maintain access to affordable credit to operate and make payroll in this economic climate.

 Click here to read my entire March 2009 District Newsletter.

Update from Congresswoman Melissa Bean

Dear Friend,

Like many of you, our family has experienced consequences from the falling values of our savings and home. As we plan to send our oldest daughter to college in the fall, we know we will have to save and borrow more for tuition to cover what we have lost in the market. Across the district, rising unemployment has increased economic anxiety, and businesses are struggling to maintain access to affordable credit to operate and make payroll in this economic climate.

As President Obama stated recently when he addressed the nation, America's economic recovery will require bold and broad action on multiple fronts. To support America's innovation and growth in the private sector, Congress has been working to stimulate economic recovery, stabilize our financial system to restore credit availability, reduce home foreclosures, and improve regulatory oversight of our financial services industry.

Enclosed is a summary of the **American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009**, H.R. 1, which Congress passed to jump-start our economy. The bill is balanced and offers what our ailing economy needs: targeted tax cuts and stimulative spending. Intended to save or create 3.5 million jobs, this bill puts money where it matters – focusing on infrastructure investment, green energy, health IT, and tax cuts for families and small businesses.

Communities facing revenue shortfalls will have access to funds in the stimulus bill to avoid severe cuts in teachers, police, firefighters and other vital services, instead of increasing local property taxes.

I remain committed to serious deliberation of forward-thinking solutions to address the challenges our nation is facing. As important, I am working hard to increase oversight and accountability for all of our government agencies, to ensure effective investment and the best return of our tax dollars.

As always, it is an honor to represent you. If you have questions or comments, please e-mail me or call my office.

Sincerely,

Melissa L. Bean

Congresswoman Melissa Bean

What's in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act?

Tax Cuts and Benefits for Families

Congresswoman Bean fought to make sure that middle-class families will see real benefits from the recovery act.

- **Tax cuts for 95 percent of working Americans.** This rebate on your payroll taxes will provide up to $400 for individuals and $800 for middle-class families, and will start appearing as reduced withholding on your paycheck by April.

Congresswoman Bean visited the Willow Creek Care Center, a local food pantry, to discuss how the recession has increased need across the 8th District.

For further details, visit www.recovery.gov

- **$8,000 first-time home buyer tax credit.** T bill provides qualified first-time home buyers $8,000 tax credit when purchasing a principa residence on or after January 1, 2009, and be December 1, 2009.
- **College tuition tax credit.** The American Opportunity Tax Credit provides a tax credit up to $2,500 for each of four years, and will benefit up to 156,000 college students and th families in Illinois.

- **COBRA coverage assistance.** The Health Insurance Stability Act, H.R. 7010, that Congresswoman Bean introduced led to a provision in the bill that provides federal cov of 65 percent of COBRA premiums for far attempting to maintain their preexisting plan after losing a job. This will help eligible famil maintain COBRA coverage for up to nine m
- **$250 stimulus payment** for Social Securi recipients, arriving sometime between May a June 2009.
- **Protects 26 million middle-class familie from the AMT.** This package ensures that 1,021,000 Illinois taxpayers will not see the taxes increase due to the Alternative Minimur

Creating Jobs in Infrastructure, Green Technology, and Health IT

America has lost 4.4 million jobs since the recession began. In the short term, the recovery act penalizes states who do not quickly commit road funds towards needed job creation. Investments in energy innovation and health care efficiencies will create new technology and green jobs that will enhance our long-term competitiveness in the global economy.

- Transportation spending will not only **improve our roads and bridges,** it will put our friends and neighbors back to work quickly. Here in Illinois, we will see $935 million for modernization of roads and bridges and investment in high-speed rail. States are required to spend this money on ready-to-go projects, to create immediate community jobs and improvements.
- The recovery act could create roughly 1 million next-generation **green energy jobs** nationwide with investment in development of new, innovative energy sources. Congresswoman Bean advocated for investment in a modernized, "smart" power grid, included in the bill. This power infrastructure sets the stage for continued investment in wind, solar, geothermal and other renewable energy development, particularly in Illinois, a growing leader in wind power.
- The United States spends roughly twice as much (as a percentage of GDP) on health care as other industrialized countries. To **improve our nation's physical and fiscal health** and global competitiveness, we must eliminate costly inefficiencies. The recovery package provides funding to implement electronic medical records, which will better equip our doctors with timely and accurate data, saving lives and money. This should create hundreds of thousands of jobs in the information technology sector and reduce health costs for the federal government by $12 billion over 10 years.

Small Business Support

Small businesses are the cornerstone of our community economies, providing roughly 80 percent of our nation's new jobs. To help small businesses meet the challenges of our current economy, Congresswoman Bean worked with leaders in Congress and the White House to ensure inclusion of:

- **An increase in tax write-offs for capital expenses, to encourage businesses to invest.** This is a continuation of Congresswoman Bean's 2008 GROW Act provision that temporarily doubles the Section 179 small business expense tax deduction, encouraging businesses to invest now in equipment that can grow their business.

Congresswoman Bean speaks to students at Antioch Community High School about the role of Congress and public service.

- **An expansion of tax provisions to retroactively spread out this year's losses and avoid layoffs.** Under present law, businesses with a net-operating loss this year may amend their tax filings to carry that loss back two years to offset taxable income in such years, so they can "smooth out" swings in business income. A provision in the recovery bill, also previously introduced in Congresswoman Bean's GROW Act, extends the loss carryback over five years, so that otherwise strong businesses suffering under the recession can get a retroactive tax rebate to cover current expenses and payroll.