



U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release: February 10, 2009

Contact: Rob Blumenthal w/Inouye 202-224-1010
John Bray w/Inouye 202-224-3751

Chairman Inouye Floor Statement on ARRA

Washington, DC. – Senate Appropriations Committee Chairman Daniel K. Inouye (D-Hawaii) delivered the following floor statement today in support of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009.

“Mr. President, I rise today to restate my strong support for the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. This bill will create more than 3.5 million jobs. It will provide billions of dollars to support our state and local governments, and it will prevent tens of thousands of teachers, firemen, policemen and other providers of essential services from being laid off at the worst possible time. It will provide tax cuts for working families. And it will invest in the future of this nation, by rebuilding our roads, sewers, mass transportation systems and other essential infrastructure.

“We must pass this bill immediately. According to the Labor Department, the United States has lost 3.6 million jobs since the recession began in December 2007. Roughly half of those losses have occurred in the past three months. Our job losses are accelerating, and if the federal government does not take bold action immediately, those losses will only continue to worsen.

“That is why this legislation is focused first and foremost on creating jobs. Every job we create by investing in infrastructure, every job we save by providing extra funds to state and local governments, is one more American who will know that their government has done everything it can to help its citizens recover from this terrible economic crisis.

“Total appropriations in the amended bill are \$290 Billion. Some have suggested that we in the Senate have paid too high a price in our efforts to reach a bipartisan solution. As the Chairman of the Appropriations Committee, I am keenly aware of the adjustments that have been made to this legislation in order to secure the 60 votes we need. None-the-less, I know that \$290 billion is far superior to nothing, which is what we have if we do not garner 60 votes. This remains a very strong bill that will make a difference in the lives of millions of Americans.

“As I stated before, nothing is more important than the more than 3.5 million jobs that will be created or preserved through this legislation. Our goal is to find ways to stimulate the private sector through public sector spending. We have no interest in growing the federal bureaucracy. In fact, this legislation will create fewer than 5,000 new federal jobs. That’s three-tenths of one percent -- hardly a vast growth in the government.

“We are focused on jump-starting necessary spending projects that will get this economy back on track as quickly as possible. In fact, preliminary CBO /Joint Tax scoring shows that for the bill as a whole, including spending and tax cuts, 78 percent of the funds will be spent in Fiscal Years 2009-2010.

“Some of the opponents of this bill have complained that it has too much wasteful spending. Helping states deal with long term investments such as health, education, and science is not wasteful spending. These are programs that will directly touch millions of Americans, and will improve the quality of their lives. And let me say again that there are no earmarks in this bill.

“As for some of the other charges leveled by opponents of this bill, I can only say that the facts speak for themselves. Despite claims that the recovery package contains \$150 million for honeybee insurance, there is not, and there has never been, any language with regards to honeybees contained in this legislation. There is no funding for prevention of sexually transmitted diseases, nor for smoking cessation programs, nor for re-sodding the National Mall. And as I have already stated, this bill will create fewer than 5,000 new federal jobs, which is well short of the 600,000 new federal jobs that some have suggested.

“The facts speak for themselves. We face a grave economic crisis. We have a nation that stood up three months ago and voted for change, not for more of the same policies that got us into this crisis in the first place. This legislation is not perfect, but it absolutely represents the change that millions of Americans voted for on November 4th, and I hope my colleagues will join me in giving our citizens the change they demanded, and vote ‘Yes’ on the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

###