

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

February 10, 2009

The Honorable Harry Reid
Majority Leader
United States Senate
S-221, U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Daniel K. Inouye
Chairman
Senate Appropriations Committee
S-131, U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Max Baucus
Chairman
Senate Finance Committee
219 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Charles E. Grassley
Ranking Member
Senate Finance Committee
135 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Thad Cochran
Ranking Member
Senate Appropriations Committee
113 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Dave Obey
Chairman
House Appropriations Committee
H-218, U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jerry Lewis
Ranking Member
House Appropriations Committee
H-218, U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Charles B. Rangel
Chairman
House Ways and Means Committee
1102 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Henry Waxman
Chairman
House Energy and Commerce Committee
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Dave Camp
Ranking Member
House Ways and Means Committee
1139-E Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Conferees:

As you negotiate a House/Senate compromise on H.R. 1, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, I strongly urge you to invest in the state fiscal stabilization fund at the level included in the House-passed bill.

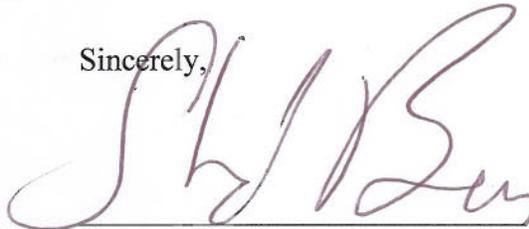
Increased unemployment numbers coupled with reduced consumer spending and decreased property values have lead to a substantial drop in the revenue states depend on for day-to-day operations. Forty-six states are now facing substantial budget shortfalls. Unless Congress takes action, more jobs will be lost and the basic services that keep communities around the country safe and prosperous will be cut. Our national economic recovery hinges on state economic recovery. We cannot ignore the latter and expect to achieve the former.

The flexibility granted to states for public safety, health, and social service programs under section 13001 of the House bill is essential to retaining existing jobs and continuing many services currently provided by state governments. One pressing concern that should be front and center as the conferees meet is how to minimize the risk to children that arises during recession. Economic downturns are associated with a statistically significant increase in child abuse and child abandonment. State budget deficits are forcing cuts in social worker programs even as the need for these professionals grows dramatically. We must face up to the human costs of inaction on our part and help states weather the dramatic drop in their revenues.

Finally, the states will be expected to translate infrastructure and other funding into jobs, and to do so quickly. The states must be sufficiently resourced to accomplish that goal. The state stabilization fund is an investment in job creation, in lasting economic recovery, and in the well-being of vulnerable children. I ask for your support to maintain the state stabilization funding in the House-passed recovery bill.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "S. Brown", written in a cursive style.

Sherrod Brown
U.S. Senator