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February 2009 Wrap Up

Dear Friends,

On February 24th, 2009 I attended a joint session of Congress and, along with millions of you, listened to President Obama discuss the incredible challenges confronting all of us. That night, President Obama established a clear vision for our economic recovery that is built on America's history defined by action in turmoil.

This E-Newsletter provides an overview of:

- The President's economic recovery package and how it will benefit Ohio
- Buy America provisions in the package that will create American jobs
- The digital television transition that will enable continued television service for Ohioans.

Let's continue to fight together during these challenging, yet hopeful times as we usher in a new era of opportunity and prosperity for Ohio families.

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009

Over the last two years, I've held more than 130 roundtables and visited all of Ohio's 88 counties. From Perry to Wood, from Darke to Trumbull, at roundtable after roundtable I heard from community leaders, economic development experts, workers, and Ohio families about the need to do something about our anemic economy.

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, which was signed by President Obama on February 17, 2009, is a critical first step in putting Ohio's economy on a new path.

Ohio will receive more than \$8 billion to help create as many as 133,000 Ohio jobs. The funds are designed to stimulate Ohio's economy through investment in infrastructure projects, foster new business growth and new industry, and help millions of Ohio middle class families with much-needed tax relief.

[Job Creation through Infrastructure Investments](#)

What We Can Do

As your United States Senator, my top priority is ensuring the best constituent services possible. My office is able to help you with concerns and questions you have about the federal government. We can also help you navigate federal programs and agencies.

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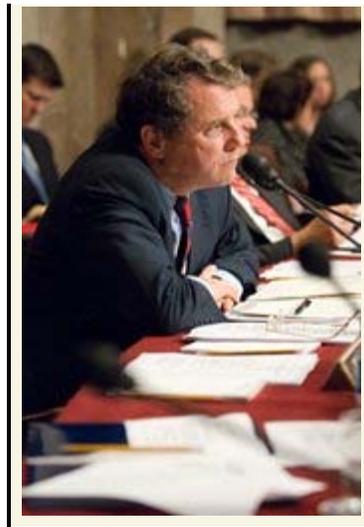
To better serve you, I have created a website that is as much a "virtual office" as it is a source for information about your government.

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Ohio is suffering from its highest unemployment rate in more than twenty years—8.8 percent—higher than the national average. Equally troubling is the crumbling infrastructure plaguing communities all around Ohio. Aging or inadequate infrastructure can create risks to the public health and obstacles to crucial economic development.

The economic recovery package will help promote both job creation and much-needed infrastructure investment and improvement throughout Ohio. It will help modernize water and sewer systems, as well as rebuild roads and bridges while strengthening ports, airports, and railroads.

Green Energy Development

For Ohio—with a proud manufacturing history—this Act means more than just money for our state's services and shovel-ready projects. This Act means investment in new industry and new manufacturing jobs.

Earlier this month, I visited a growing green energy company in Toledo that manufactures lightweight solar panels. It has nearly tripled the number of its employees in the last year—25% of whom are former employees of the auto industry.



Brown discusses new energy development at Xunlight Corporation in Toledo, Ohio

President Obama's economic recovery package invests in green energy development and can help re-position Ohio's manufacturing sector as we work to turn Ohio into the "Silicon Valley" of green energy. It is designed not only to build on the important green-energy development already being done in Ohio—solar-power technology in Toledo and Cincinnati, wind-power in Cleveland, and fuel cell development in Canton—but also to help establish a green energy supply chain in Ohio. Ohio has the skilled workforce, green energy expertise, and unrivaled manufacturing capacity to supply every component needed for green energy production.

Economically-Distressed Communities and State Stabilization Funds

When package delivery company DHL announced that it was closing its North American headquarters in Wilmington, Ohio, I saw first-hand the devastating impact that massive job losses have on communities and families. During debate on the economic stimulus bill, I fought for \$50 million to be directed to the Economic Development Administration for the most "economically-distressed communities," like Wilmington and dozens of others across the Ohio and the nation. These targeted federal investments will assist communities facing massive job losses due to severe economic distress resulting from corporate restructuring. Combined with an extension of unemployment benefits and increased funding of National Emergency Grants for workforce training, the economic recovery package will help ensure that we do all we can to help families and communities survive such a devastating economic crisis.

The recovery package will also benefit thousands of people like Todd Bumphis, a recent graduate of Cincinnati Jobs Corps. Jobs Corps is a U.S. Department of Labor program that funds education and career training programs around the country. It will receive \$250 million from the economic recovery package. Todd, a proud graduate of Jobs Corps, credits the program for providing the training to find a career and support his family.

Questions about the Economic Recovery Package:

To help ensure that up-to-date information on the economic recovery package is available to you, I have created a special Web page through my Senate Web site. For more information on the economic recovery package, please click on this link: http://brown.senate.gov/issues_and_agenda/issues/stimulus.

Buy America

As Congress debated the final provisions of the economic recovery package, Senator Byron Dorgan of North Dakota and I worked on behalf of America's workers to champion the Buy America provisions in the legislation.

Buy America laws - which have been in existence for more than 70 years - ensure that whenever possible, American-made materials are used in projects funded by the federal government.

This is common sense. These laws, which are fully consistent with our obligations under international trade agreements, help ensure that our nation maintains the capacity to supply our military and infrastructure needs, while promoting American jobs and businesses.

With our nation's unemployment rate soaring and manufacturing jobs heading overseas on a daily basis, it simply makes sense to ensure that taxpayer dollars, to the greatest extent possible, are used to create U.S. jobs.



Brown joins ArcelorMittal plant and union leaders to discuss job-creating Buy America provisions

As part of the Buy America debate, I wrote an OpEd on the issue that appeared in *The New York Times* online Opinion section. A copy of the full text is included below.

It is really pretty simple.

While Congress debates the economic recovery package, it's clear the American people are willing to reach deep into their pockets and spend tens of billions of dollars to build roads, repair bridges, and construct water and sewer systems. And all that they want is that the work be done by Americans and that the materials they use are made in America.

Who could be against that? Well, some Ivy League economists don't like it—something about Smoot Hawley and the Great Depression. And newspaper publishers pontificate about free trade theory, as they see their advertisers flee and their papers shrink. And the CEOs of some of America's largest corporations tell us it will cause a trade war, as they collect million dollar bonuses while laying off American workers and outsourcing jobs to China and India.

These are not people who are about to lose their jobs to bad trade policy.

Other than this small, shall we say elite group, you could search far and wide and find almost no one who thinks "Made in America" is a bad idea.

Yet when some of us in the Senate proposed strengthening the Buy America laws, and enforcing the Buy America rules, that have been federal law for decades, some economists, newspaper publishers, and CEOs accused us of being—gasp—protectionists.

An \$800 billion trade deficit and they accuse the United States of protectionism? Two billion dollars a day net outflow of trade dollars and they claim that we are closing our borders? In Ohio, people would say that accusations like that don't pass the straight face test.

The truth is that the United States has had Buy America laws in place for some 70 years. The purpose is to promote U.S. manufacturing and encourage new industry—both of which come in handy when a country is trying to put its economy on the right track, maintain global economic leadership, and create jobs for the millions of American currently standing in unemployment lines.

Let's be clear. Buy America does not mandate the purchase of U.S. goods. Buy America allows waivers in cases where American-made products necessary for a project are not readily available. Waivers are also allowed where project cost is 25 percent more expensive than it would be if imports were used. The Buy America provision in the economic recovery

package changes none of that.

Buy America does not violate World Trade Organization agreements or any international trade laws. Buy America encourages using tax-payer dollars to invest in U.S. companies and create U.S. jobs. Buy America is a choice. Do we want to use billions in tax dollars to create jobs in Ohio or in China?

While our European and Asian competition too often subsidizes their industries, protect their businesses, and fight for their workers, our manufacturers continue to decline. And, our companies are given tax breaks by our government when they outsource jobs.

Countries around the world practice trade according to their national interest.

Perhaps the United States should do the same.

DTV Transition

With so much attention understandably focused on the economic recovery package, I wanted to make sure to update all Ohioans on the transition from analog to digital TV signals.

Digital television uses radio frequency spectrum much more efficiently than traditional analog television. A transition to all-digital broadcasting will free up critical frequencies for police, fire, and other emergency responders.

Congress recently agreed to delay the upcoming digital television transition. On February 17th, 2009, all television stations in the United States were scheduled to stop broadcasting in analog and switch to digital broadcasting. This date has now been **extended to June 12th, 2009**.

However, a small number of stations still transitioned on February 17th and others will transition on dates prior to June 12th. This is because some stations have received permission from the FCC to transition early. You may wish to call your local station or visit its website to read more about their DTV transition plans.

If you are currently using a television with a digital tuner, or if you subscribe to a cable or satellite service, you will not be affected by this switch. However, for those consumers utilizing over-the-air signals through a rooftop antenna or "rabbit ears," you will need a DTV converter box to continue watching television.

The government set up a program to provide two \$40 coupons per requesting U.S. household that can be used toward the purchase of DTV converter boxes. Coupons were to be issued between January 1st, 2008, and March 31st, 2009. Because of funding issues, many people requesting coupons were placed on a waiting list.

In order to make sure everyone was helped, President Obama urged lawmakers to postpone the February 17th deadline for the transition. Congress responded by passing the DTV Delay Act. Besides delaying the DTV switch until June 12th, the legislation also extends the deadline to apply for coupons until July 31st, 2009, and allows those with expired coupons to re-apply for new ones. Additionally, the recently-passed American Recovery and Reinvestment Act provides additional funding for the coupon program. Federal officials now anticipate that the coupon backlog could be cleared within weeks.

In these tough economic times, I support President Obama's effort to ensure all Americans receive DTV coupons and that all Ohioans are prepared for these changes.

Thank you again for your interest in hearing more about the issues that matter to Ohio. Please don't hesitate to contact me with your comments, concerns, or questions by visiting www.brown.senate.gov.

Sincerely,



Sherrod Brown



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