

From: Congresswoman Betty McCollum [betty.mccollum@congressnewsletter.com]

Sent: Friday, June 04, 2004 8:37 PM

To: danykhy@yahoo.com

Subject: Congresswoman Betty McCollum

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Congresswoman Betty McCollum - Minnesota's 4th District

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Dear Friend,

Congress should be working to create jobs to replace the more than 2 million that have been lost the last three years. 38,000 private sector jobs and 43,000 manufacturing jobs have been lost in Minnesota since January 2001. Unfortunately, a bill passed this week by Republicans does nothing to replace them.

The bill, HR 444, would authorize a pilot program to allow unemployed workers to receive job training vouchers also known as personal re-employment accounts. Personal re-employment accounts (PRAs) could be as small as \$500 (but are capped at \$3,000) with the actual amount of the voucher to be determined by state or local workforce boards. If a worker accepts a PRA, they have to pay for otherwise free job counseling and training services and are banned from the existing job training system for a year. If an individual gains employment, they would be able to keep the balance of their PRA.

We should be investing in our nation's existing workforce training infrastructure. Last year, the Dakota County Workforce Council helped over 1,000 dislocated workers and their resource rooms served nearly 40,000 individuals. Even more people could have received job training assistance with adequate funding for our One-Stops.

Congress is giving unemployed workers vouchers up to \$3,000 instead of the job training they need and deserve.

Republicans are ignoring the real problems facing working families.

I have heard from Minnesota's workforce professionals who are worried that without new money, job training funds will to be diverted under this plan, reducing funding for proven, successful job training programs offered by workforce training centers in my district.



Statement by Congresswoman Betty McCollum on the Resignation of CIA Director George Tenet

Director Tenet's departure does not answer the real questions I have. How was Ahmad Chalabi placed on the administration's payroll and invited to the State of the Union as the President's guest while he was trading secrets with Iran? Who committed the crimes inside the White House that disclosed the identity of Tenet's own CIA operative? This resignation does not change a thing - we have a mess in Iraq, a scandal in the White House and America is not safer.

Congress needs to help the unemployed now, not start new, unproven programs.

We should be extending unemployment benefits for the 1.5 million workers who have exhausted their current benefits, including over 26,000 Minnesotans who lost their benefits because Congress failed to act in December.

This bill creates no new jobs while limiting worker access to existing training services. These vouchers undermine benefits for the long-term unemployed who can already access job training services.

Workers in my district are not looking for new employment vouchers. They are looking for jobs.

Sincerely,



Congresswoman Betty McCollum
Minnesota's 4th District



Located in South St. Paul, Twin Cities Bagel employees over 125 people and produces more than 40,000 bagels per hour - 24 hours a day. Mr. Michael Rouache, the owner of Twin Cities Bagel and Congresswoman McCollum discussed the challenges of a growing business and the rising cost of health care.

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