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Press Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 7, 2009

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Detroit Senators Support Workers, Cast Vote For Hire Michigan First Legislation

Democratic priority to give incentives for hiring more Michigan workers finally approved by the full Senate

LANSING, Mi. – Detroit Senate Democrats today joined their colleagues and helped pass Hire Michigan First legislation which will give incentives to companies that hire Michigan workers instead of importing workers from out-of-state. Senate Democrats have spent the last several years trying to force a vote on these bills. Today the State Senate finally approved some of the House and Senate bills in the package.

“These bills are an important step to getting Michigan workers back on the job,” said State Senator Tupac A. Hunter (D-Detroit), one of the Democratic members of the Senate Commerce and Tourism Committee which approved these bills earlier this week. “These bills will help Detroit workers land good jobs with companies that receive economic incentives from Michigan.”

“Hire Michigan First will have a profound impact on Michigan’s workforce and its struggling economy and the passage of this legislation shows we are truly rooting for the home team,” said Senator Buzz Thomas (D-Detroit), Senate Democratic Floor Leader. “Even if we don’t agree on all the provisions, any conclusion is positive as this issue has been a priority for our caucus for several years.”

The items in the Hire Michigan First package that were approved by the Senate today would ensure that the millions of dollars Michigan spends in the form of tax breaks, abatements and other economic incentives in this state will be re-invested in our workers. The bills passed would also prohibit and punish those businesses that would contract with persons not authorized to work in the United States.

“Michigan families are in a state of crisis, and reducing unemployment and keeping people in their homes need to be our top priorities,” said Sen. Hansen Clarke, Minority Vice Chair of the Commerce and Tourism Committee where these bills originated. “Now is the time to provide jobs for Michigan residents and support our neighbors. These bills will keep taxpayer dollars here in the state, putting people back to work and stabilizing local economies.”

“In these very tough economic times we need to do everything we can to help workers find good jobs so they can support their families, and this legislation will do that,” said Senator Irma Clark-

Coleman (D-Detroit). “Michigan families have made a lot of sacrifices in recent months. Passing the Hire Michigan First legislation is finally good news for Michigan citizens.”

Senate Democrats also fought to include measures that would strengthen the bills. They sought to ensure that companies employing Michigan workers pay them a prevailing wage so that they are able to make enough money to feed their families and keep a roof over their heads. Senate Democrats also tried to correct loopholes in the bills inserted by Republicans that will make it easier for companies to not hire Michigan workers.

Additionally, three bills in the package have yet to see any Senate action:

- Senate Bill 289, a bill that would change the current law requiring vendors who contract with the state to hire not less than 50% of Michigan residents to 100% of Michigan residents
- Senate Bill 288, a bill that would allow Michigan to cancel a contract or stop payment under a contract to a vendor who knowingly hires illegal aliens or who knowingly violates Michigan's Prevailing Wage Law.
- Senate Bill 291, a bill that requires vendors under state contract to report on the number of new jobs created under the contract and the number of Michigan residents hired on that project.

“I am glad that Senate Republicans finally agreed with us on the urgent need for these bills and brought them to the Senate floor for a vote,” said Senator Martha G. Scott (D-Highland Park). “Giving our Michigan workers a chance at these jobs will go a long way to improving our economy and rebuilding our cities and communities.”

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