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**HOUSE OF DELEGATES**  
RICHMOND

**WILLIAM J. HOWELL**  
SPEAKER

TWENTY-EIGHTH DISTRICT

COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS:  
RULES (CHAIRMAN)

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## **Virginia Business Leaders Stand with Republicans in Support of Job Protection and Creation**

-- Business Owners Voice Support for Republican Actions to Help Workers, Save & Create Jobs --  
-- Leaders Highlight Positive Steps Taken by Republicans to Assist Unemployed Virginians --

**RICHMOND, VA** – Standing united in support of policies that help people in need, encourage job creation and promote sustainable economic growth, Speaker of the Virginia House of Delegates William J. Howell (R-Stafford) and House Republican Majority Caucus Chairman Samuel A. “Sam” Nixon, Jr. (R-Chesterfield) today joined with business owners and employers from across Virginia to detail the positive impact on job retention and creation of Virginia Republicans’ recent actions on unemployment insurance. At the April 8 reconvened session of the 2009 General Assembly, the House of Delegates [approved a temporary 13-week extension in unemployment benefits, lowered health insurance costs for laid-off workers and small business](#), and [rejected amendments by Governor Kaine to SB 1495](#) that would have permanently expanded state unemployment insurance benefits resulting in higher per-employee taxes for Virginia businesses.

“Republicans know that a robust, growing economy is key to helping laid-off workers, families and taxpayers who are hurting, thereby freeing businesses and entrepreneurs to invest in job creation and expand opportunities,” remarked **Speaker Howell**. “Virginia businesses that will create the jobs necessary to return our economy to prosperity understand that permanently expanding our state unemployment insurance system will result in higher taxes on jobs, creating a disincentive for new hires and business investment. Acting in a caring and responsible manner, Republicans have taken appropriate steps to assist unemployed Virginians during this economic recession. But, we also recognize that the goal of a laid-off worker is not a short-term government check, but rather a full-time job in a thriving business. I appreciate the support of so many Virginia business owners and leaders. Together, we are going to continue working to create jobs for Virginians and revitalize our state’s economy for the long-term. That’s the top priority for Republicans.”

During the 2009 General Assembly session, Republicans supported a number of legislative initiatives to provide needed assistance for Virginians who have been laid off from their jobs or are unemployed, including:

- Extending benefits for an additional 13 weeks – beyond the traditional 26 weeks of coverage – for those workers currently eligible for unemployment, making some eligible for benefits for 59 weeks or more than a year;
- Ensuring those who are laid off or unemployed now have 65% of their health insurance premiums paid for them by extending COBRA insurance for Virginians who’ve lost their job at a small business;
- Accepting \$62.5 million in federal stimulus funding to help modernize and support Virginia’s unemployment insurance trust fund that pays out benefits to unemployed Virginians; and
- Keeping almost 1,000 currently eligible Virginians from falling off the UI program rolls.

– more –

**Donelson “Donnie” Caffrey, Owner and President of Good Foods Groceries**, a Richmond-based home-grown natural food store that employs 45 Virginians, commented, “Though it is easy to be criticized for turning down \$125 million in federal stimulus money, as a local business owner I applaud Virginia Republicans for voting not to accept the money because of the burdensome strings attached to SB 1495 by Governor Kaine. Standing against the amendments to SB 1495 was a simple act of standing up for common sense and the sustainable viability of businesses in our great Commonwealth.”

**John Nicholson, Co-Owner of Company Flowers**, a family owned and operated flower and gift store in Arlington, said, “Our little shop has paid thousands each year into the Virginia Unemployment Trust Fund, even though we’ve never laid off anyone in the past 10 years. Now the Federal government – holding out the seductive lure of short-term monies – wants to broaden coverage of the Fund to part-time workers and others. We support, and have paid willingly for, generous unemployment benefits. But these Federal ‘everyone-has-to-do-it’ rules will only hike our rates and force us to cut back on hiring new workers. Why tamper with what’s been successful for our state? Sadly, the headlines would sound like everyday workers would benefit, but that’s just not the truth. To cover these new rate increases when the Federal give-away dollars run out, businesses like mine will be forced to cut back.”

**Debra Girvin, President of Lochlyn Company**, a Chesterfield-based, small business Human Resources firm, noted, “When times are difficult the Virginia legislature has proven that they will come through for displaced workers. To add yet another tax burden to small business, especially in these difficult times, would cause them to cut back, hire fewer people or even close their doors. A focus on more taxation for people that previously were not even eligible to receive the benefit is of no benefit to businesses – and in the end – to workers themselves. Today, more than ever, is a time when we should be focused on job creation and economic stability, not an additional handout at the expense of business. Let’s be certain that we are giving Virginians the opportunity to fish, not just another handout.”

**James T. Hatcher, III, President of Pleasants Hardware**, a hardware store in business since 1915 with 200 employees in the Richmond area, Harrisonburg and Virginia Beach, added, “I wish to commend Republicans for standing firm and opposing the Governor’s amendments to SB 1495. They seem to fully understand that the perceived short-term benefits associated with this proposal are not worth the long-term consequences. I can tell you first-hand that expense control is more critical today than at any other time I can remember in my 25 years with the company. Those who oppose this legislation understand that a more appropriate solution is to limit the number of people who need to avail themselves of this benefit and that an effective way to accomplish that goal is by holding down costs to businesses, allowing companies to maintain and grow employment. Unfortunately, the ultimate and long-term costs associated with this legislation will be carried by individual employees as businesses pass on costs in the form of smaller pay increases, reduced hiring and staff reductions.”

“Donnie Caffrey, John Nicholson, Debra Girvin, and James Hatcher know first hand the benefits of Virginia’s business-friendly policies,” said **Sen. Thomas K. Norment, Jr., Senate Minority Leader**. “It is these policies that have allowed their businesses to thrive and that have made Virginia an attractive home for so many businesses and industries. Even in this time of economic hardship, Virginia has continued to successfully attract new jobs to the Commonwealth due to our business climate and well-qualified work force. The policies advanced by Republicans this year struck the right balance by providing additional benefits to those who most need them during this time of hardship, while at the same time making Virginia a place where companies continue to want to locate and provide jobs.”

“As Republicans have consistently maintained, the best unemployment program is employment for the citizens of Virginia,” concluded **Delegate Nixon**, a member of the Commission on Unemployment Compensation. “Republicans have and will continue to approach this important issue in a deliberate, thoughtful and responsible way. It is so disappointing, therefore, that political campaigns and partisan have been working overtime recently to misinform, misrepresent and skew a serious public policy debate on what is best for the long-term health, strength and recovery of workers, businesses and Virginia’s future economic prosperity. The Governor’s changes to our state unemployment insurance system provide Virginians a clear choice on the path to economic recovery. From everything that I have heard, read and seen recently, it appears Democrats want to kill jobs and increase taxes on businesses, while Republicans want to create jobs, grow the economy and maintain Virginia’s strong pro-business environment. The fact that the businesses which employ our citizens recognize this choice – and have voiced their strong and steadfast support for our decision – demonstrates the common sense approach of Virginia Republicans in providing practical solutions that deliver real results.”