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Smith: Stimulus Must Protect American Workers

Washington, D.C. – House Judiciary Committee Ranking Member Lamar Smith (R-Texas) issued the following statement regarding today’s Department of Labor report that the unemployment rate reached 7.6%, and that the number of first-time jobless claims reached a 26-year high.

“American jobs continue to disappear at a staggering rate, and 11.6 million Americans are now out of work. At the same time, according to the most recent estimates from the Pew Hispanic Center, seven million jobs are held by illegal immigrants.

“In the 110th Congress, the House passed a long term extension of E-Verify, the federal government’s system that enables companies to hire legal workers, by an overwhelming 407-2 bipartisan vote. But the bill was held up by a few Senators.

“In this Congress, the House version of the stimulus included a multi-year extension of the program, as well as new provisions requiring any business that receives funding from the stimulus program to utilize E-Verify.

“Now the Senate has the chance to protect jobs for U.S. citizens and legal immigrant workers. The need is stronger than ever to ensure that the Senate stimulus includes an extension of E-Verify and a mandate for its use.

“E-Verify immediately confirms 99.4% of work-eligible employees. And the National Federation for Independent Business supports making it mandatory. But E-Verify will expire in March if the Senate doesn’t act.

“This important program helps preserve American jobs for U.S. citizens and legal immigrant workers. With millions of Americans currently unemployed, Congress cannot allow E-Verify to expire.”

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