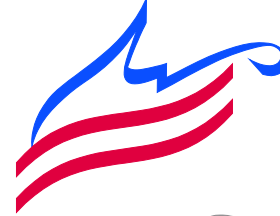


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*Governor Manchin, Senate President, House Speaker To Attend*



WEST VIRGINIA CHAMBER

## Federal Issues Report

December 17, 2009

This is an e-newsletter of the West Virginia Chamber of Commerce focusing on key federal policy issues and bills. Provided are overviews and status updates on a number of major federal matters that are of concern to business and economic development in West Virginia.

### **Congresswoman Capito Calls For State's Congressional Delegation To Use Clout For Coal, Jobs**

Second District Congresswoman is calling on the state's congressional delegation to stand behind the coal industry and to use its political clout "to fight for our state and fight for West Virginia jobs." Here is an excerpt from a blog posting written yesterday by Capito:

*"Some are suggesting that our miners should concede, and essentially accept the inevitable by dropping any opposition to wrong-headed policies. This mindset presumes that the political winds are too strong, and the special interest groups too powerful. This is wrong. We have an obligation to stand up and make our voices heard. Those who are worried about a "spot at the table" are simply fighting over scraps. Our delegation has a certain degree of clout and I think West Virginians have a right to expect that we use it."*

Provided is a link to the entire text of Congresswoman Capito's blog – [click to read](#)

### **Businesses, Groups Urged To Keep Pressure On EPA**

With job losses in the coal industry starting to become a sad reality, business groups, employers and public officials are encouraged to continue to speak out against the U.S. EPA's ongoing actions involving coal permits and regulations. To get contact information for W.Va.'s Congressional delegation: [click here to get information](#) (Note: The most immediate way to get your voice heard is to call or send a fax to any of the D.C. offices.)

**Editorial: Fola Mine Closure Would Affect Clay Schools**

[The State Journal, December 17, 2009](#)

### **Climate Change Talks Seem Deadlocked; Agreement In Question**

News reports this morning indicate that there is a certain amount of disagreement about key provisions of a United Nation's agreement on climate change. According to an article in today's The New York Times, "the conference has been deadlocked over emissions cuts by, and financing for, developing nations, including China, who say they will bear the brunt of a planetary problem they did little to create." The U.N. is hosting a climate change summit in Copenhagen, and President Obama will be attending the conference tomorrow, which will be the last day. Also, the U.S. pledged today to join with other nations in creating a \$100 billion yearly financing fund to help poor nations deal with climate change challenges. However, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said the financing provided by the U.S. is contingent on reaching a climate change deal.

**Story: China Tell U.S.: No Deal**  
[Politico.com](http://www.politico.com), December 17, 2009

## **Cap-and-Trade Cost Calculator**

[Click to determine](#) possible cost impact on you.

## **Consensus A Problem For Senate's Health Care Reform Bill**

The U.S. Senate's goal of passing national health care reform before Christmas seems in doubt today... with Democratic leaders still having trouble reaching consensus from among Democrats and Independent Senators. Key sticking points remain about the public option, abortion funding restrictions and the cost of the entire plan.

Read more: [http://www.politico.com/news/stories/1209/30694\\_Page3.html](http://www.politico.com/news/stories/1209/30694_Page3.html)

## **U.S. House Passed "Jobs" Bill, Second Stimulus Package**

The U.S. House approved a \$154 billion "jobs" package that is designed to help create jobs, improve infrastructure, and provide more aid to states and added funding for several safety-net programs. The "mini stimulus" bill passed late Wednesday on a 217-212 vote, with no Republicans voting for the plan. Here are details about the bill's provisions, as reported in [today's Wall Street Journal](#):

The package includes \$27.5 billion for highway construction and repair projects. The bill would also designate funding for infrastructure-related projects, including transportation, school construction, rehabilitating Amtrak trains and wastewater-treatment modernization.

Under the bill, \$79 billion would be designated to help prop up safety-net programs, including a \$41 billion, six-month extension of federal jobless benefits; a \$12.3 billion extension of subsidies for individuals who lost health-care coverage when they were laid off; and \$23.5 billion for the federal government to assume a larger portion of state governments' Medicaid costs.

## **U.S. Chamber Calls on Senate To Fix Financial Regulatory Reform Bill**

*(Provided is a statement issued Dec. 11, 2009 by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce about the Consumer Financial Protection Agency.)*

**WASHINGTON, D.C.**—David Hirschmann, president and CEO of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce's Center for Capital Markets Competitiveness (CCMC) today made the following statement after the passage of a massive financial regulatory reform bill in the House that also creates a new so-called Consumer Financial Protection Agency (CFPA):

"While we are disappointed with House passage of a 1,300-page financial regulatory reform bill that leaves many of the underlying issues unaddressed, we are encouraged that there is growing recognition

that there is a better way to overhaul our outdated, financial regulatory system. We now look forward to working with the Senate to advance more effective reforms that will protect investors and strengthen our capital markets without adding new layers of bureaucracy on top of the current system. Enacting the wrong financial regulatory reforms will have adverse consequences and will be felt throughout every corner of the economy and delay Main Street recovery. [Click to read the U.S. Chamber's entire statement.](#)

### **Oppose the Consumer Financial Protection Agency Act**

Legislation is moving in Congress that would create a new government agency to regulate consumer financial products. The legislation is [H.R. 3126](#), the Consumer Financial Protection Agency (CFPA) Act. Unfortunately, this bill will do far more harm than good.

The bill would replace personal choice with federal bureaucrats who would decide the types of financial products and services that a person can choose to own, buy, or sell. Instead of a common sense approach to improving consumer protection, this proposal will restrict access to credit and affordable financial products, impose vast new regulations and costs on businesses, and ultimately harm the economy at exactly the time when signs of a recovery are on the horizon.

The bill also would affect virtually every business. If your business allows customers to pay with credit, to use a lay-away program, or even to pay in more than one installment, then your business would face significant new regulation. Even businesses that are indirectly related to consumer finance, such as sellers of gift cards, advertisers, accountants, homebuilders, utilities and internet providers, will be covered by this sweeping new law.

In addition, the bill would give the government authority to request and hold information about a person's bank accounts from financial institutions, including how much money is in each account. This is a drastic affront on the privacy and security of a person's financial information.

Efforts to enhance consumer protection should focus on weeding out fraudulent actors and predatory products and ensuring consumers have access to clear and concise information about the terms and conditions of products, and the risks they pose. However, this bill actually weakens consumer protection

## **LOOMING FEDERAL ISSUES**

### **Card Check/EFCA**

#### **Employee Free Choice Act (EFCA) ([H.R. 1409](#), [S. 560](#))**

The West Virginia Chamber and other national business groups continue to closely monitor legislation pending in Congress that would enact a "card check" system for unionization. The Employee Free Choice Act (HR 1409/S 560) is one of the major objectives of organized labor groups, and it continues to have the full backing of President Obama. W.Va. Chamber members, both large and small...and from all business sectors, continue to be overwhelmingly (85 percent) opposed to EFCA.

#### ***EFCA Positions of W.Va.'s Delegation:***

Congressmen Mollohan and Rahall are co-sponsors of HR 1409 ([Source: Thomas](#))

Congresswoman Shelley Moore Capito opposes HR 1409

Senators Byrd and Rockefeller are co-sponsors of S. 560 ([Source: Thomas](#))

W.Va. Chamber's EFCA policy paper – [click to read](#)

### **Election/Campaign Finance**

The West Virginia Chamber of Commerce continues to monitor decisions of the U.S. Supreme Court in re: Case -08-205, Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission. This case was orally argued on Sept. 9, 2009, and deals with a documentary about Hillary Clinton. This case challenges states' abilities to restrict free speech with statutory restrictions in campaign financing. The decision of the U.S. Supreme Court may change the political playing field for corporations and how advocacy for candidates is handled by all stakeholders.

**Other Federal Bills:**

[H.R. 12](#): Paycheck Fairness Act

[H.R. 635](#) – National Commission on State Workers' Compensation Laws Act of 2009

[H.R. 3042](#), S. 1374 -- Federal Oversight, Reform, and Enforcement of the WARN (“FOREWARN”) Act

[H.R. 2460](#); S. 1152 -- The Healthy Families Act (Mandated Paid Sick Leave)

**TAKE ACTION -- RESOURCES:**

Contact information for W.Va.'s Congressional delegation: [click to read](#)

*(Note: The most immediate way to get your voice heard is to call or send a fax to any of the D.C. offices.)*

Vote For Business: West Virginia - <http://www.wvbusinessvoice.com/>