

Dear Fred,

Thank you for sharing your thoughts on our nation's current economic situation. This is an important issue, and I am grateful that you took the time to be in touch about it. (*I sent my comments about the Stimulus bill to his office several days before he voted on a bill he had not read. Not sure of the exact date but this reply is several months late.*)

I know that West Virginians, along with many others throughout America, are facing difficult economic times and struggling to make ends meet. Fluctuations in the stock market are having a significant impact on retirement savings. (*Yep just look at your 401K or IRA statement*) As people are being laid off and unable to find new employment, it is becoming increasingly difficult for families to keep a roof over their head and food on the table. I believe the deteriorating economy has made it clear that Congress couldn't wait for the economy to fix itself (*no you right Jay I am sure that tax cuts for employers would have been far more expensive than spending \$6000 in recovery act signs just on the road just between Huntington & Elkins WV*) - there is far too much at stake, far too many jobs already lost in our state, and far too many families struggling right now. (*Um Senator when was the last time that you came back to WV? We have been a depressed state for over 40 years. I wonder if it has something to do with that one party rule thing we have been putting up with for 70+ years.*)

West Virginians deserve economic policies that will support them through these tough times. (*More welfare? How lowering taxes and bringing jobs into the state? How about not killing one of the major industries in the state with Cap and Trade. In Fact the stimulus billed has a provision that killed welfare to work.*) The goal of the economic stimulus has always been to prevent the further collapse of our economy and to provide a foundation for future economic growth. (*They must have been in a hurry too, because only 6% of the stimulus had been spent mostly on interstate signs stating that they are spending the stimulus. The bulk of the spending does not kick in until 2010 an election year I wonder why that is?*) Therefore, I voted in support of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (H.R. 1), which was signed into law by President Obama on February 17, 2009. (*Yeah Barry spend more money we do not have and also not reading the bill.*) I believe this legislation will create badly-needed jobs for West Virginians, help rebuild our state's infrastructure, (*How many more roads do we need? How about a better business climate to invite employers into the state.*) and give aid to West Virginia families during this incredibly tough time. (*And the streets will be paved with gold, dogs and cats will get along, unlimited ice cream. It just seems like I have heard this before? Oh that's right every election year.*)

Having heard the struggles of countless West Virginians, I successfully fought to make sure the final version of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act included assistance for families and the unemployed, (*accepting funding for extended unemployment benefits that are only funded in the short term after that the state which does not have enough money will be forced to foot the bill*) funding for school construction, investments in advanced coal technologies, and grants for high-speed Internet deployment and funding to help protect the health care safety net. (*Safety net? You are trying to spend trillions for a national health care plan that we do not need*) I would like to point out some of the programs that are already

putting money back into the hands of hundreds of thousands of working West Virginians and those most in need:

- o 700,000 West Virginia families are receiving \$300 million in tax cuts through the Making Work Pay Tax Credit; ***(This was done by changing the tax withholding tables not the actual tax rate. Many of these families will end up owing the government money next April)***
- o 495,000 West Virginia SSI, Social Security, veterans' disability, and railroad retirement recipients are receiving a \$250 payment to help them get by in this recession;
- o 88,000 West Virginians are benefitting from an additional \$25 per week in unemployment compensation, the extension of the emergency unemployment compensation program, and the tax break on the first \$2,400 in unemployment compensation benefits received in 2009; and
- o 295,000 West Virginians are benefitting from the 13.6 percent increase in maximum nutrition assistance benefits, allowing them to keep food on their tables as they struggle to stay afloat.

All the bullet point items above were financed at the graciousness of the Chinese government. What the Chinese did not purchase in treasury bonds the Fed just printed the money to buy the bonds themselves what a great idea!

These programs provide individuals and families with more money in their pockets, and in turn, more money to spend at businesses throughout our communities. ***(I think a permanent tax cut would put far more money back in the pockets of consumers)*** The final two programs I mentioned - unemployment compensation and nutrition assistance - not only help our state's most vulnerable populations, but economists agree that they are among the best forms of economic stimulus per dollar spent. ***(Yes that would be because you are buying votes)***

The provisions of this bill are critical to reinvesting in our people and our economy - and making sure our families and communities stand strong well into the future. While this is by no means was perfect piece of legislation, I believe that it will help put us back on the right track. For the most current information on funding, or to read the complete text of the law, please visit <http://www.recovery.gov>. ***(This website was supposed to represent transparency for the bill but it will not be fully updated for another 18 months well after the money has been spent)***

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me about our nation's economic situation. I wish you all the best. ***(Jay don't worry I will be contacting you again and again as I always have in the past)***

With Warm Regards,
Jay Rockefeller