

# ***PRESS RELEASE***

---

---

*... from the Illinois House of Representatives*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

**June 18, 2009**

**FOR MORE INFORMATION:**

**State Rep. Karen May**

**Phone: (847) 433-9100**

## **Governor Signs Rep. May's Bill, Extending Access to Health Care Coverage for Laid-Off Workers**

I am pleased to announce that on June 18 Governor Pat Quinn signed a law that I authored and sponsored to make health insurance more affordable for laid-off workers of small businesses and their families. House Bill 2325 passed overwhelmingly with bipartisan support.

Under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), those who formerly worked at companies of 20 employees or more are eligible for a subsidy that reduces by 65 percent the cost of COBRA health care coverage. The new Illinois law, authored by State Rep. Karen May (D-Highland Park,) provides a 65 percent health insurance payment subsidy to those who worked for companies with fewer than 20 employees.

"I am pleased to sign legislation to help those, who through no fault of their own, have lost their jobs and can no longer afford health insurance for themselves and their families," said Governor Quinn. "I thank the General Assembly for its bipartisan support of this legislation and I look forward to their continued cooperation as we work to protect our most vulnerable citizens."

The legislation gives employees of small businesses who lost their jobs after September 1, 2008, and who declined COBRA because of its high costs, a second chance to enter the program. Under this plan, those former workers can continue their health insurance coverage and receive a 65 percent premium reduction.

The law also provides up to an additional three months of coverage for many former employees of small businesses. It also clarifies notification requirements by employers so that people know their rights of continued healthcare coverage.

In these tough economic times, it is important to provide immediate assistance to the citizens of our State, which is precisely what this law does. I have worked to strengthen Illinois' COBRA continuation law for two years, and am so pleased that the Governor has signed this measure into law today.

I want to thank Senator Susan Garrett for carrying the bill in the Senate. I am pleased the Governor signed the bill so quickly, because it has an immediate effective date, so our citizens can access these important benefits in this economic recession.

“With the enactment of this new law, small business employees will also receive the full benefit of the federal subsidy, enabling them to afford much-needed coverage instead of having to decline health insurance in favor of other necessities,” said Michael T. McRaith, Director of the Illinois Department of Insurance.

###