

## **COLEMAN AND BAUCUS INTRODUCE TRADE ADJUSTMENT ASSISTANCE FOR INDUSTRIES ACT**

*Bill streamlines process for individuals to receive benefits under more efficient certification procedures*

Washington, DC - Minnesota Senator Norm Coleman and Montana Senator Max Baucus (D-MT), Ranking Democrat on the Senate Finance Committee have introduced the Trade Adjustment Assistance for Industries Act to help streamline the process for certification of TAA claims on an industry- or occupation-wide basis, rather than on a plant-by-plant basis. Under current law, eligibility for TAA is assessed plant-by-plant, which may pose problems when a single company closes multiple factories or multiple producers in a single industry close due to import competition close to the same time. In these cases where multiple lay-offs occur on a national or regional scale, plant-by-plant certification is inefficient, requiring the Department of Labor to investigate the same cross-industry claims multiple times. Current practice could lead to inconsistent results where one textile plant or lumber mill gets certified, while another in the same industry does not.

“Our number one objective is to keep and grow good paying jobs in America and that is what things like tax relief, the Highway Bill, and the Energy Bill are all about,” said Coleman. “But in cases where a mom or dad loses a job to off-shoring, we shouldn’t make them jump through bureaucratic hoops to get the help they need to get back on their economic feet. Let’s get them the training they need to get into a new, better paying job, and the income support and access to health care they and their families need in the meantime to make ends meet.”

The Trade Adjustment Assistance for Industries Act eliminates the need for the Department of Labor to reinvestigate eligibility claims where the import/injury link is already established by another agency and guarantees consistent treatment for workers. In addition, the bill permits the Secretary of Labor to investigate and certify workers on an industry-wide or occupation-wide basis when either (1) She receives 3 or more petitions from firms in the same industry or occupation within a 6-month period; or (2) such an investigation is requested by either the Senate Finance Committee or the House Ways & Means Committee.

The new legislation dovetails with The Trade Adjustment Assistance Equity for Workers Act of 2005 introduced last month by Senators Coleman and Baucus to provide retraining, income support, and health insurance to service sector worker if they lose their job to off-shoring. Under current law, Trade Adjustment Assistance benefits are only available to workers who produce goods, but not services, excluding nearly 80 percent or more of the American workforce.

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