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**SCHAKOWSKY: "THE CHOICE IS CLEAR WHEN IT COMES TO STIMULATING THE ECONOMY -EITHER YOU ARE ON THE SIDE OF WORKERS AND FAMILIES OR HUGE CORPORATIONS."**

WASHINGTON, D.C. - During a Capitol Hill news conference today, U.S. Representative Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) urged rejection of the Republican so-called economic stimulus packaged and support for the Democratic alternative. She said, "The choice is clear when it comes to stimulating the economy - either you are on the side of workers and families or huge corporations. The Democrats are offering a economic stimulus package that will boost the economy, offer help to those who need it, and is paid for."

Pointing to the Republican so-called stimulus plan, she added, "The Republican package shamelessly raids the Treasury at a time of crisis on behalf of the wealthiest corporations and barely throws a bone to unemployed workers. Republicans are pushing their worn out agenda of tax cuts that their lobbyist friends were demanding even before the sirens were silent at ground zero. That is just shameless pandering"

"I call on the President and all members, Republicans and Democrats, who care about those unemployed Americans suffering from the double hit of the economic downturn and the fallout from September 11 to reject this outrageous plan," Schakowsky said.

"The choice could not be any clearer. Whose side are you on - special interests or American families? It's a no-brainer. It is unbelievable and inconceivable that anyone would vote for this irresponsible bill," Schakowsky added. She called on the President and Republicans "to be responsible and stand with the American people."

The Democratic economic stimulus plan would expand unemployment benefits by 25% or \$65 per week, whichever is greater and extends benefits an additional 26 weeks; provide federal payments of 75% of COBRA for one year and assistance for states to offer Medicaid coverage to low-income unemployed individuals and their families; provide a tax rebate to individuals who filed tax returns in 2000, but did not receive a rebate under the Bush tax plan; and creates \$11 billion in interest free financing for school construction and modernization.

The Republican bill offers only minimal unemployment and healthcare assistance, while giving companies \$20 billion in tax benefits to operate overseas. It includes a permanent reduction in the capital gains tax, 72% of which would benefit the wealthiest 2% of the people.

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Schakowsky is the author of the First Things First Act of 2001, H.R. 2999, a sound economic initiative that will help the federal government meet the long-term critical needs of millions of Americans and respond to the September 11th terrorist attacks.

**The First Things First Act would put on hold parts of President Bush's tax cut that benefit the wealthy, thus freeing hundreds of billions of dollars as a down payment for domestic priorities.**