

SEPTEMBER 25, 2001

**SCHAKOWSKY, DEMOCRATS READY TO HELP AIRLINE WORKERS AFFECTED BY
SEPTEMBER 11 TRAGEDY**

ANNOUNCE *DISPLACED WORKERS ASSISTANCE ACT*

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Saying that Congress has already issued a \$15 billion check to the airlines, U.S. Representative Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) today called for immediate passage of legislation to help the airline workers. The Displaced Workers Assistance Act would provide financial assistance, training, and health care coverage to employees of the airline and related industries who lose their jobs as a result of the attacks on September 11, 2001. The bill's chief sponsors are Democratic Leader Dick Gephardt (D-MO) and U.S. Representative Alcee Hastings (D-FL). This bill is the companion to S. 1454 in the Senate.

"On my way back to Washington, an airline employee told me that after seven years on the job, she expected to be laid off this week. She and the 100,000 other workers who will be laid off need our help as much as the industry itself," Schakowsky said.

"I am proud to stand with my colleagues in support of the Displaced Workers Assistance Act. We are ready to help the pilots, the flight attendants, the baggage handlers, the mechanics, the ticket agents and the hundred of thousands of workers who have lost their jobs, health care, and income," Schakowsky added.

Under this bill, once individuals exhaust their 26-week state unemployment insurance, they will be eligible for an additional 52 weeks of cash payments funded by federal dollars. Those who do not qualify for state unemployment benefits would receive 26 weeks of federally financed unemployment insurance. Also, the legislation would provide funds for retraining benefits. In addition, the federal government would fully reimburse eligible individuals for their COBRA health insurance premiums. Individuals who do not qualify for COBRA and are otherwise uninsured would be eligible for Medicaid with the federal government covering 100 percent of the premiums. These health care benefits would last for a maximum of 18 months.