Washington, DC (December 23, 2011) - U.S. Representative Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) released the following statement today in response to House passage of ***a two month extension of middle class tax cuts, unemployment insurance, and the Medicare physician payment rate:***

"Today House Republicans finally ended their so-called game of 'high stakes poker' that gambled with the financial security of millions of middle-class Americans, the unemployed and o ur seniors who faced losing access to their doctors at the turn of the new year.

For inexplicable reasons, House Republicans spent a week obstructing passage of a bipartisan Senate bill to **extend the payroll tax cut of nearly $40 per paycheck and prevent a tax increase for 160 million Americans. If they had succeeded in holding the country hostage to fringe factions of their party, over 2 million Americans would have lost unemployment insurance and 48 million American seniors and people with disabilities who rely on Medicare could have been turned away by doctors who could no longer afford to see them.**

I commend President Obama and Congressional Democrats for standing by the American people and remaining firm that Congress should act to avoid an immediate crisis during this holiday season. There is still much work to be done once Congress returns next year and I hope our colleagues on the other side have learned a valuable lesson to put politics aside and ensure Americans get the critical relief they deserve."

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Contact: Adjoa Adofo, (202) 225-2111

adjoa.adofo@mail.house.gov