

Courtney's Visit Takes Him To 'Frontline Of Recession'

Congressman vows to fight for Obama's giant stimulus plan

By [Patricia Daddona](#) Published on 2/3/2009



By Associated Press

U.S. Rep. Joe Courtney, D-2nd, visited the Connecticut Works One-Stop Career Center Monday in New London to learn about the service's needs as the recession deepens. "A job is the best social program to restore confidence people have in themselves and in the future of this country," Courtney said.

New London - U.S. Rep. Joe Courtney, D-2nd District, came to the Connecticut Works One-Stop Career Center Monday to learn about the service's needs as the recession deepens.

What he learned about joblessness and struggling families made him resolve all the more, he said, to fight for President Barack Obama's \$819 billion stimulus plan, which, according to national news reports, Senate Republicans want to reduce.

"This is the frontline of the recession," Courtney said after meeting with several area leaders and touring the center. "To me, the takeaway is: A job is the best social program to restore confidence people have in themselves and in the future of this country."

The Eastern Connecticut Workforce Investment Board partners with the Connecticut Department of Labor to run the center, which can serve anyone,

employed or unemployed, said John Beauregard, workforce executive director.

Among those joining Courtney were state Sen. Andrea Stillman, D-Waterford; Deb Monahan, executive director of the Thames Valley Council for Community Action; and Grace Jones, president of Three Rivers Community College.

Monahan said requests at the TVCCA for help with home heating assistance have exploded among "the newly unemployed - people that a year ago never would have imagined themselves coming to a human service agency for help."

Jones said spring enrollment at Three Rivers is up nearly 5 percent, and people who work at Pfizer Inc., are inquiring about science offerings available at the college. In addition, a second, new, "shovel-ready" building is about to go up that Jones hopes will qualify for federal financial assistance.

"Our buildings will accommodate our growth," she said.

Stillman noted upcoming development of biomass technology at the NRG plant in Montville and added, "We need more of that."

"With the hundreds of thousands of jobs we're losing in this area, and we don't even know what Pfizer is going to do next with the (proposed) buyout of Wyeth, people are very nervous," she said. "People are on tenterhooks."

Stillman wanted to know if the state could expect more money to help with the bad news about the state deficit that is expected on Wednesday. Courtney indicated what's in place for the Democrats' proposed American Recovery & Reinvestment Act may be all that's available and will, in itself, require "a fight" to earn passage.

He suggested appealing to U.S. Sens. Christopher Dodd and Joe Lieberman for support.■

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