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Bernero Calls Hoekstra Opposition to Unemployment Extension Callous

LANSING, MICH. – July 23, 2010 - Lansing Mayor and Democratic gubernatorial candidate Virg Bernero today called Republican gubernatorial candidate Pete Hoekstra's opposition to extending federal unemployment benefits callous and outrageous. Bernero said the congressman's stance proves he is out of touch with the concerns of Michigan residents.

U.S. Rep. Hoekstra (R-Holland) decided to skip out on voting to extend unemployment benefits that would restore benefits to more than 90,000 Michigan residents and 2.5 million nationally who saw their benefits lapse. Hoekstra was the only Michigan representative not to vote on the most recent extension of unemployment benefits.

"The people of Michigan are hurting, and Pete Hoekstra is rubbing salt in the wound," said Bernero. "Hoekstra is not on the side of people in Michigan, when they need him the most, where is he? Skipping a vote of this magnitude and opposing something that would help thousands of Michigan residents who continue to struggle to find work in Michigan, where are Pete's priorities?"

Despite Hoekstra's absence, the bill passed with bipartisan support. All Michigan Democrats were present and voted for the bill.

"My campaign is about helping the hard-working men and women of Michigan," Bernero said. "As Michigan's governor, that's who I'll be fighting for every single day. I will put an end to advancing the demands of special interests above the needs of the people of Michigan. We deserve better from our elected officials."

Bernero's campaign to Make Michigan Work Again is resonating with voters and organizations statewide. The campaign has gained endorsements from across the state, including the Michigan League of Conservation Voters, Sierra Club of Michigan, Michigan Clean Water Action, Planned Parenthood Advocates of Michigan, Michigan NOW, the Michigan Education Association (MEA), the American Federation of Teachers Michigan (AFT Michigan), the Michigan Nurses Association (MNA) and the Michigan AFL-CIO. The AFL-CIO represents more than 600,000 active and retired members in 59 unions throughout Michigan, including the United Auto Workers, the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, the American Federation of Teachers and the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees.

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