

### *Call for Immediate Passage in House to Extend Middle Class Tax Cuts*

**WASHINGTON** – Ways and Means Committee Democrats today introduced legislation identical to the middle class tax cut bill that passed the Senate last week. The measure, H.R. 15, would extend the Bush tax cuts for households with incomes up to \$250,000. The Senate's 51-48 vote approving the legislation last Wednesday put the onus on House Republicans to quickly act so that middle-income families can rest assured that their tax cuts will be extended next year. Separately, Ways and Means Democrats also introduced legislation, H.R. 16, to reinstate the 2009 Estate Tax provisions (top rate of 45%, \$3.5 million exemption) providing responsible estate tax relief and ensuring 99.7 percent of decedents will face no estate tax liability. The Republican bill spends approximately \$9 billion more to provide a complete exemption from the estate tax for just 3,600 additional decedents.

"House Republicans can and should pass this measure immediately to give certainty to middle class families," said **Ways and Means Committee Ranking Member Sander Levin (D-MI)**. "Republicans are holding up an extension of tax cuts for more than 100 million American families for the sake of a \$160,000 average tax cut for 374,000 millionaires. It's time they reset their priorities and put middle class families first."

"The only thing blocking this bill from reaching the President's desk is the stubbornness of House Republicans," said **Rep. Charlie Rangel (D-NY)**. "The legislation has already passed in the Senate and President Obama could easily sign it into law right away. Will House Republicans hold 98 percent of Americans hostage to benefit the wealthiest 2 percent? The time has come for them to join me and my colleagues in putting the average American first, instead of protecting a select group of millionaires and billionaires."

"We all agree that extending tax cuts for the middle class is the right thing to do. Without action, 13.2 million middle class California families will see their federal income taxes increase by an average of \$1,600," said **Rep. Pete Stark (D-CA)**. "What's unconscionable is House Republicans' decision to hold them hostage in order to win tax breaks for the wealthiest Americans. These individuals don't go out and spend this money to rev up our economy: the more than 100 million middle class Americans who benefit from this tax break do. It's time to implement this smart, fair tax policy."

“The Senate-passed tax bill provides tax relief to 98% of Americans and it’s a plan that can pass,” said **Rep. Jim McDermott (D-WA)**. “I am sick of the hypocrisy among my Republican colleagues. First they say the economy isn’t growing because the tax cuts will expire and taxes will go up. Now they’re opposed to extending tax cuts for 98% of Americans because the richest 2% would get a big enough tax cut. Are the Republicans really worried about lowering taxes for Americans, helping their campaign donors, or simply saying ‘no’ to a real compromise and getting something done? I think the American people will see through the Republicans’ games and demand the relief that our bill and the Senate bill delivers.”

“The 400 richest families in America today own more wealth than the half of all Americans combined-- more than 185 million Americans combined,” said **Rep. John Lewis (D-GA)**. “In 1960 those 400 families would have paid around 50 to 70 percent of their income in taxes. Today they pay only around 15 percent. Meanwhile, the tax rate for middle class Americans has increased in that period from around 14 percent to about 20 percent. We applaud the success of the wealthy, but they are already experiencing unprecedented, dramatic reductions in their tax responsibilities. Just as every American reaps the benefits of living in this country, each should bear their fair share of responsibility and sacrifice. It’s not right for Republicans to stand in the way of tax relief for millions of families. The time to act is now.”

"During these tough economic times, let's not waste any more time - let's extend the tax cuts for the 114 million American middle class families whose taxes are scheduled go up next year, including 2.5 million Massachusetts families," said **Rep. Richard E. Neal (D-MA)**. "This is something we all agree on - Republicans and Democrats - let's end this uncertainty for 98 percent of American families and pass this important legislation this week."

“Everyone in Washington agrees that preventing a tax hike on working families is the right thing to do in these difficult economic times. Giving Americans some economic certainty and putting money in the pockets of middle-class consumers will help get our economy moving again and build a stronger future. But instead of doing what we all agree on – extending the middle class tax cut – Republicans are holding the middle class hostage to protect huge tax breaks for the very wealthiest Americans. Worse, their plan would actually *raise* taxes on 25 million lower- and middle-income families and add an additional \$50 billion to the deficit next year alone,” said

**House Democratic Caucus**

**Chairman John Larson (D-CT)**

. “With a \$1-trillion deficit, the country simply can’t afford to keep giving out tax breaks to the wealthy and large corporations and still meet our pressing needs. That’s why Democrats are insisting that we ask the richest 2% of Americans to pay their fair share so that we can start paying down the deficit, create jobs and put people back to work.”

“There’s no question we have to pass the Senate-passed tax bill this week, ending the Bush tax cuts for the richest 2% while extending them for everyone else,” said **Rep. Earl Blumenauer (D-OR)**. “It’s not right give tax breaks to billionaire hedge fund managers and CEOs that allow them to pay lower tax rates than working people. The Senate-passed bill allows us to extend the cuts for 98% of the population, help cut the deficit, and protect Medicare and education.”

“The GOP tax plan can be easily summed up this way: it’s a tax increase on U.S. military families. By ending tax breaks that benefit working, middle class families, our military families will take a direct hit under the Republican plan,” said **Rep. Joe Crowley (D-NY)**. “I really don’t see how it’s justifiable or sensible to give a tax cut to the wealthiest among us, but at the same time increase taxes on U.S. soldiers. We have an obligation to reject this tax hike on our heroes and, instead, pass the Democratic proposal.”