

Washington, D.C. –Representative David Price (NC-04) issued the following statement today after voting in favor of legislation to extend the Obama Administration's payroll tax holiday and unemployment benefits for millions of Americans who have lost their jobs as a result of the recession. The measure, which will add an average of \$1,000 to the paychecks of 160 million working Americans and inject \$100 billion into the economy, also avoids an impending cut in Medicare payments to doctors, ensuring that millions of seniors will not lose access to affordable health care.

Although Congressman Price expressed strong support for the payroll tax cut, unemployment insurance, and Medicare doctors provisions, he also criticized congressional Republicans' insistence on offsetting the cost of these measures by increasing federal employees' contributions to their pension funds, reducing Medicare payments to hospitals and laboratory service providers, and rescinding funding from a key provision of the Affordable Care Act.

"I am proud to stand with the President and working Americans today by supporting this measure, which will add an average of \$1,000 to the paychecks of working North Carolinians this year, extend unemployment benefits for Americans who have lost jobs through no fault of their own, and ensure seniors on Medicare will be able to see their doctors. After a year in which Republicans in Congress took the country from one manufactured crisis to the next, this bipartisan agreement is a step in the right direction – and at a time when so many families are still struggling to make ends meet, it may be our last chance to help revive the economy as we head into an election year.

"Once again, however, House Republicans are asking us to rob Peter to pay Paul, and the positive economic impact of this measure will be undermined in part by their senseless and misguided insistence that federal employees, hospitals, clinical laboratories, and preventive health programs must bear the cost. Unemployment benefits are paid out during true economic emergencies and should not require offsets. And to the extent we should offset the cost of the other programs extended in this measure, we should do so by asking corporations and the wealthiest Americans to pay their fair share – not by asking middle-class Americans and providers of health care who have already sacrificed in the name of deficit reduction to do even more.

"I'm particularly troubled by the demonization of federal workers by Republicans in Congress, which has reached a crescendo of late. To be effective and respond to the needs of the American people, government needs to attract the best and brightest to public service. Federal

employees have already been subjected to a pay freeze, and now we are asking them to open their wallets again to pay for unemployment benefits for workers who have lost their jobs.

"I cannot in good conscience oppose a measure that puts money in the pockets of American workers, protects our fragile economic recovery, and maintains the safety net for unemployed workers and health care for seniors. But we simply must do better if we are to maintain the promise of expanding opportunity for working and middle class Americans."

###