

Washington, D.C. - Today, Congresswoman Melissa Bean joined a coalition of House Democrats to announce the formation of a new Democratic Middle Class Working Group and to unveil a legislative agenda that will help middle class families succeed. The Middle Class Success Agenda includes thirteen bills to address college costs, health insurance, energy costs, small business, elder care and child care.

“These are commonsense initiatives targeted to middle class families as they address real life priorities like health care and college costs at a time of economic anxiety,” Bean said.

A majority of adult Americans identify themselves as “middle class.” According to a recent Pew Research Center study, 56 percent of the middle class say that, in the past five years, they either haven’t moved forward in life, or they’ve fallen backward. Moreover, 79 percent of those surveyed say it is more difficult now than 5 years ago to maintain their standard of living. The American middle class is struggling under the financial burdens of a modern lifestyle: paying for college, caring for aging parents, maintaining health insurance, saving for their retirement, and balancing their work and family obligations.

The Democratic Middle Class Working Group was created to address those challenges and craft policies that will help middle class Americans attain the success they desire. The Working Group is co-chaired by Reps. Melissa Bean (D-IL), Nancy Boyda (D- KS), Andre Carson (D-IN), Ciro Rodriguez (D-TX), Tim Ryan (D-OH), Carol Shea-Porter (D-NH) and Anthony Weiner (D-NY).

Along with the Democratic Middle Class Working Group, Congresswoman Bean announced The Health Insurance Stability Act which will help Middle Class families maintain health care coverage in between jobs or during a waiting period before new coverage or Medicare kicks in, providing our nation with a level of health care security.

“My bill provides an advanceable \$2,000 tax credit for families (\$1,000 for individuals) to help offset the costs of maintaining their COBRA coverage when employer sponsored health is not available,” Bean said.

Additionally, Congresswoman Bean introduced The Family Work Flexibility Act of 2008 which will provide a \$500 tax credit to employers toward telecommuting equipment. “As a working parent, I appreciate the challenge of balancing work and family responsibilities. This family friendly bill will enable more employees to work from home, providing them the flexibility they need to remain in the workforce while also caring for their families,” Bean said.