



**February 5, 2010**

## Democrats Sketch Outline of Jobs Plan

By **[DAVID M. HERSZENHORN](#)**

WASHINGTON — Senate Democratic leaders unveiled a new “jobs agenda” on Thursday morning, and said they hoped to hold a first vote on the legislation early next week. But they offered no details, and presented only a scant outline of proposals they might pursue, some of which echo initiatives they failed to include in last year’s stimulus bill.

The core of the proposal is likely to be a payroll tax break for employers who hire workers who have been without jobs for at least 60 days. Democrats are trying to enlist Republican support for that idea, which was proposed most recently by Senators [Charles E. Schumer](#), Democrat of New York, and [Orrin G. Hatch](#), Republican of Utah.

But a senior aide to the Senate Republican leader, [Mitch McConnell](#) of Kentucky, quickly issued a statement questioning the Democrats’ lack of specifics. “They don’t know what’s in the bill or how many jobs they expect it to ‘save or create’ or when anyone beyond the Beltway will see it or how much it will cost,” the aide, Don Stewart, said.

At a news conference on Thursday morning, the majority leader, Senator [Harry Reid](#) of Nevada, and other top Democrats distributed a two and a half page document listing some of their ideas for spurring job creation, including the tax cut for new hires, an extension of unemployment benefits and spending on highways and other infrastructure.

The list also included grants for school building renovations nationwide, a proposal that Democrats fought hard to include in last year’s \$787 billion economic [stimulus package](#), but that was opposed by Republicans who supplied the key votes needed to pass the measure, including Senator [Susan Collins](#) of Maine.

Mr. Reid, asked after the news conference if the Democrats' jobs agenda was an acknowledgement that the stimulus measure was not big enough, snapped: "Don't talk to me. Talk to the Republicans about how big it was, ok? Don't talk to me."

An aide to Mr. Reid, Jim Manley, said that Senate Democrats would like to put forward a "robust" jobs package, similar to a bill approved in December by the House, which would spend \$174 billion, including \$75 billion taken from the financial bailout program, and use it for job creation efforts including highway construction, school renovation and hiring of new teachers, police officers and firefighters.

But Mr. Manley said that Democrats were virtually powerless to advance such legislation because Republicans would block it. He said that more details about the Democrats' package might be available on Thursday afternoon.

Senator-elect [Scott Brown](#), Republican of Massachusetts, is expected to be sworn in on Thursday afternoon. He will become the 41st Republican in the Senate, giving the minority party a sufficient number of votes to successfully [filibuster](#) most legislation.

Economists generally urge that government stimulus efforts be "timely, targeted and temporary" a buzz phrase that Democrats repeated frequently last year. But with an economic recovery already underway, the Democrats said that Americans were still demanding that they focus on job creation.

"If we are going to get our economy back on track," Mr. Reid said, "people have to go back to work."

But Mr. Reid did not say how much the Democrats' jobs legislation would cost, how lawmakers planned to pay for it, or even how many jobs he hoped to create. "We're going to create as many as we can," Mr. Reid said.

Senator [Richard J. Durbin](#) of Illinois, the No. 2 Democrat, said that party leaders had been working for two months to develop job proposals. "There were a lot of very good ideas that came forward," he said.

Mr. Durbin urged Republicans to come forward with their own proposals.

"This is a good faith offering on the Democratic side," he said. "We're inviting our friends on the Republican

side to join us, bring your best ideas forward. Let's put these on the floor and move on them with a sense of urgency. We need to have a jobs agenda that will pass through the Senate, that will create jobs across America as quickly as possible.”

[Copyright 2010 The New York Times Company](#)

[Privacy Policy](#)[Terms of Service](#)[Search](#)[Corrections](#)[RSS](#)[First Look](#)[Help](#)[Contact Us](#)[Work for Us](#)[Site Map](#)