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Unless you have been hiding under a rock, you have already noticed that there is an U.S. economic crisis. Since December 2007, our economy has weathered the storm-tossed seas of soaring housing foreclosures, record unemployment, credit freezes and plunging stock market averages. In the African-American community, the effects have been more devastating due to the fact that we are discriminated against and are often among the “first ones to be fired.” Nationally, we are witnessing a historic rise in unemployment levels to 8.1 percent meaning that there are now 12.5 million unemployed Americans. In the State of Missouri, there are currently 219,000 unemployed individuals with an unemployment rate of 8%. With these kinds of numbers, the Missouri state government has recently asked the federal government for a loan to replenish its depleted unemployment trust fund. While looking at the gathering storm clouds it is easy for us to become depressed and believe that there is no hope for our present or future. However, there are some solutions that are on the way with the latest economic stimulus act.

I truly believe that the third installment of this economic stimulus package will get our economy moving in a positive direction. Signed into law on February 17, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act was originally intended to reduce the effects of an economic recession caused by the subprime mortgage crisis, a weakened stock market and the overall unavailability of credit. This act is much larger and more comprehensive than the Economic Stimulus Act of 2008 which paid mainly tax rebate checks to taxpayers and the Emergency Economic Stabilization Act of 2008 which paid monies mostly to banks and major financial institutions who were in crises. This act promises to fix the money problems on Main Street and not just Wall Street. With a total cost of \$787 billion, this economic stimulus act contains tax relief for individuals, assistance to state and local governments and enhanced funding for social and federal spending programs. Another major goal of this plan is to create or save three to four million jobs. There are substantial measures of this plan which calls for an extension of unemployment benefits,

one-time \$250 payments to social security recipients, infrastructure investments to rebuild America, weatherization assistance for modest income homes, food pantry assistance, increased job training programs, scientific research funding and concerted effort to make the federal government more energy-efficient.

Although these and other measures will have far-reaching effects with our economy, we must be mindful that significant change will not occur overnight. Already, there has been significant opposition from the Republican Party and Rush Limbaugh, who has publicly stated that he wants President Obama to fail. As we must all realize in this country, our motto is “United we stand, divided we fall.” Therefore, it is now important that we uphold and support our President and Congress in their attempts to revive our economy because if they fail, we all fail.