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DODD, LIEBERMAN, JOHNSON AND LARSON ANNOUNCE \$500,000 GRANT TO BATTLE UNEMPLOYMENT IN THE CAPITAL REGION

WASHINGTON, D.C.- U.S. Senators Christopher J. Dodd, Joseph I. Lieberman and Representatives Nancy L. Johnson and John B. Larson today announced a \$500,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Labor that will be used to create a system to improve the delivery of employment services in the Capital Region through community and faith-based organizations. The grant was awarded to the Capitol Region Education Council (CREC) and the Capital Region Workforce Development Board (CRWDB), which will implement the initiative, called Opening Doors.

"Too many people in our state are hurting financially. Thankfully, this initiative can help act as a economic 'triage' to help with their recovery," said Dodd. "It can help give people the tools and services they deserve to get the jobs and opportunities they need."

"It is often local communities that generate the most efficient and innovative ways to solve their problems," Lieberman said. "This grant will tap the tremendous resources of the Capitol Region's own community and faith-based organizations to help Connecticut's unemployed workers through this difficult economy."

"This is terrific news for the Hartford and New Britain communities," Johnson said. "Opening Doors will strengthen Connecticut's job training and

placement network and will help to knock down language barriers so every job-seeker can more easily access the Capitol region's social service system."

"With the highest unemployment rates in the state, I believe that this grant is a strong step in the process of addressing the needs of unemployed workers in the Capital Region," said Larson. "Through the partnership between Connecticut's One Stop employment system and community and faith-based organizations, unemployment services will now be more accessible to people throughout region."

"This is the first grant that impacts our new merged Workforce Investment Board area by serving six faith-based and community based organizations in Hartford and New Britain," said Thomas Phillips, Executive Director of the Capital Region Workforce Development Board. "More limited and non-English speaking job seekers will now be able to access training and other support services through the One Stop system"

Opening Doors is designed to build the capacity of smaller community and faith-based organizations to bring Connecticut's comprehensive One Stop employment services to those in need. The effort will focus on job seekers who speak little or no English and on improving the capacity of smaller organizations to deliver quality, core unemployment services to those that face language barriers. The initiative will be implemented in Hartford and New Britain, two cities with high rates of unemployment that are served by both CREC and the CRWDB.

CREC will provide customized technical assistance to a competitively selected group of six organizations and help each reach the organizational and staff capacity needed to deliver the appropriate level of employment services.

The four lawmakers co-signed a letter on June 2 to Labor Secretary Elaine Chao in support of the grant application.

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