

Hoffman, Beiser, Stuart call for support of steelworkers in wake of layoffs

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GRANITE CITY, Ill.— State Rep. Jay Hoffman, D-Belleville, state Rep. Dan Beiser, D-Alton, and state Rep. candidate Katie Stuart, D-Edwardsville, held a press conference today in Granite City where they discussed their support for House Bill 6594, which gives workers laid off from the U.S. Steel plant in Granite City an extension on their unemployment insurance while they look for new work.

"It's poor trade deals and mismanagement at the federal level that have led to so much job loss in the area," Hoffman said. "We've got to stand behind the workers that need more time to find new ways to support their families."

House Bill 6594, introduced by Hoffman and Beiser, extends unemployment benefits for workers laid off due to the layoffs at the steel mill in Granite City. Layoffs began nearly a year ago and today, 1,500 of the plant's 2,000 workers are off the job. Hoffman, Beiser and Stuart are fighting to help ensure those workers have the resources they need to get back on their feet, and they're working to pressure federal officials to end the trade agreements that put American manufacturers at a disadvantage.

"Workers in our area want to be on the job, and this bill gives them more time for the steel mill to reopen or to find new employment without putting their families in danger," Beiser said. "I'm calling for the federal government to end its pursuit of shortsighted trade deals that reduce the demand for American steel, and bring back the good-paying jobs our people need."

Current law caps unemployment insurance at 25 weeks and these benefits for some local steel workers has already expired. This measure would extend unemployment insurance for these workers for a year.

"Local steel workers have worked for years to build their communities and put food on the table for their families," Stuart added. "Now it's time for us to stand behind our workers, and get them the support they need to make it through this layoff."