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News

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Town hall meeting tonight to focus on stimulus package

CHARLESTON, W. Va. - A coalition of community, labor and faith groups will hold a town hall meeting tonight to discuss what the U.S. economic stimulus package means for West Virginia.

The meeting, sponsored by West Virginians United for Social and Economic Justice, is scheduled for 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. at the University of Charleston's Appalachian Room in the Geary Student Union.

"Right now, we're not in some of the dire economic circumstances some other states are," said Gary Zuckett, executive director of West Virginia Citizen Action Group, which is part of the coalition. "But every day, we see layoffs ... so we need the economic stimulus plan even in West Virginia, where we haven't really felt the full effects of the recession yet."

Last week, the House of Representatives passed the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act, and the Senate now is expected to debate the bill all week.

The Obama administration says the more than \$800 billion package would boost the economy by creating or saving millions of jobs, cutting taxes, expanding unemployment and food stamp benefits, and investing in infrastructure, education, energy and health care. Republicans say the bill contains too much spending and not enough tax cuts.

Ted Boettner, executive director of the West Virginia Center for Budget & Policy, will moderate the town hall meeting.

Speakers will include Renate Pore, president of West Virginians for Affordable Health Care; state Sen. Dan Foster, D-Kanawha; Sarah Stevenson of the WVU Institute for Labor Studies & Research; Rick Wilson of the American Friends Service Committee's Economic Justice Project; and Larry Matheny, secretary-treasurer of the West Virginia AFL-CIO.