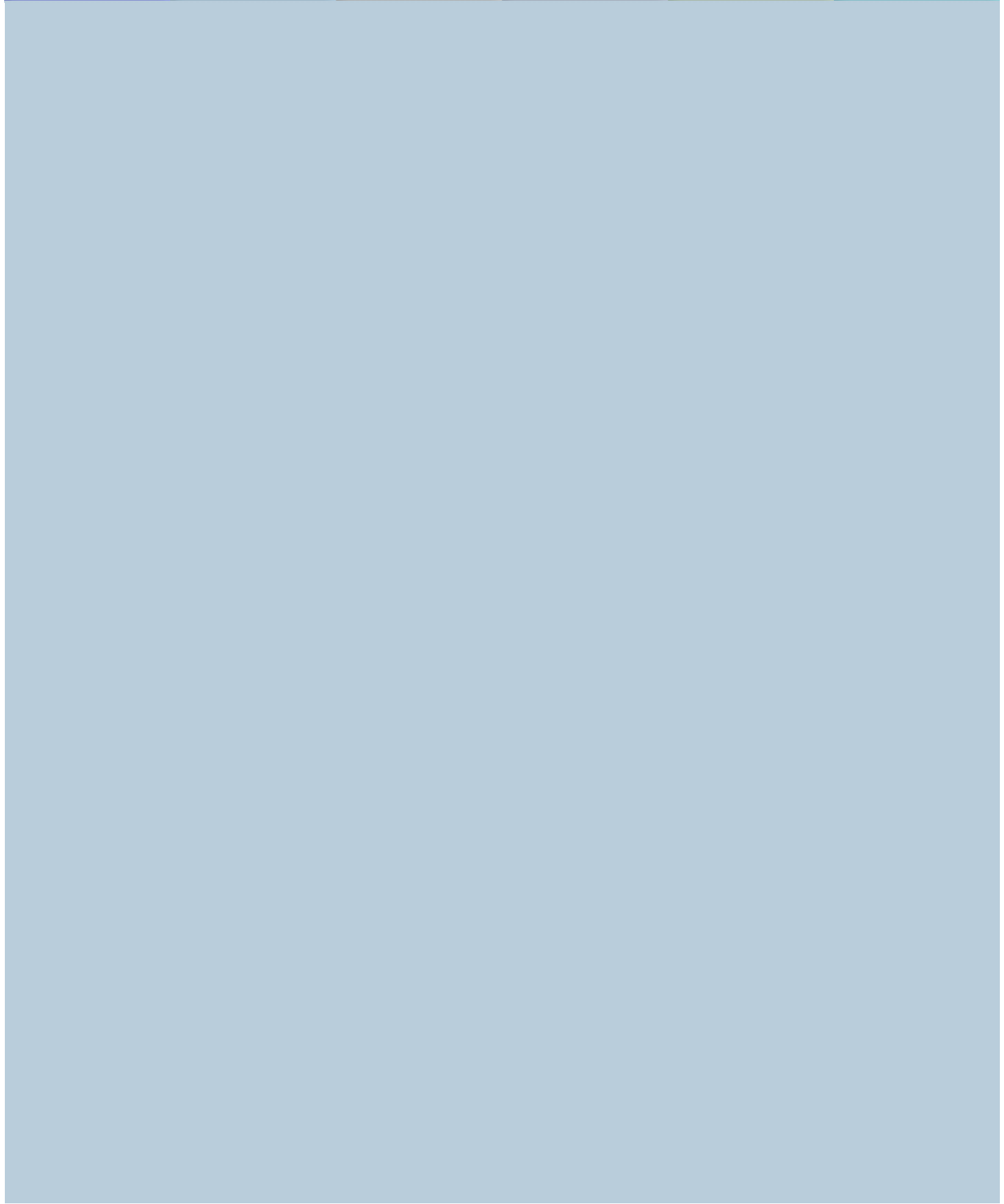




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Accept stimulus money for unemployed, advocates say

By Beth Vorhees

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April 6, 2009 · West Virginia is currently leaving \$22 million in federal stimulus money on the table. That's because to accept the money, the state would have to expand who's eligible for unemployment compensation.

On The Legislature Today, Beth Vorhees spoke with Paul Miller, of the **West Virginia Center for Budget and Policy** and Rick Wilson of the **American Friends Service Committee** about why they support those changes.

Also, amid concerns about the resulting cost to business, the House Judiciary committee has advanced proposed changes to West Virginia employers and workers meant to reinforce jobless benefits funding.

The Senate-passed measure would levy special assessments on employers as well as workers to shore up the unemployment compensation trust fund.

It would also increase the tax employers already pay into the fund, and link it to changes in wages.

House Judiciary tweaked the bill's tax timetable. It also removed language meant to deny benefits to workers involved in labor disputes.

Business groups question whether employers can afford the bill's provisions during a recession. State officials say the fund will go broke, perhaps this year, without increased revenues.

The bill now goes to the House Finance Committee, which plans to hold a Wednesday public hearing on it.



Paul Miller, West Virginia Center for Budget and Policy

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