

Sen. Sherrod Brown (D-Ohio) today introduced companion legislation to Rep. Peter Welch's Wall Street Bonus Tax Act (H.R. 4426) in the Senate, as the bill continued to build momentum in the House.

The legislation would impose a 50 percent tax on excessive bonuses at banks that received government support through the Troubled Asset Relief Program. Revenues from the levy would be directed to a new Small Business Administration direct-lending program.

"Vermonters and Ohioans alike are wondering why the same Wall Street banks that survived thanks to a lifeline thrown by the taxpayer are now rewarding themselves with excessive bonuses rather than investing in small business lending," Welch said. "I welcome the support of Sen. Brown, a longtime champion of working Americans, in this effort to restore our economy and create jobs."

"It's time for Wall Street to return the favor to Main Street," Brown said. "While big banks have rebounded thanks to the help of American taxpayers, small businesses are still struggling. If a big firm that received taxpayer help is now paying out massive bonuses, they should be able to help American small businesses expand operations and hire new workers. Small business growth will create jobs and get our economy back on track."

Welch's bill taxes bonus compensation in excess of \$50,000, while Brown's applies to bonuses in excess of \$25,000.

Since it was introduced in January, 62 House members have signed on to H.R. 4426. The Populist Caucus endorsed the legislation last week as one of four bills in its Blueprint to Recovery.