

Avner said was among “the most brutal” Israel had received from the US.

“I wish to express my profound disappointment of Israel’s attitude over the course of the negotiations,” Ford wrote. “You know the importance I have attached to the US efforts to reach an agreement. Kissinger’s mission, encouraged by your government, expresses vital US interests in the region. Failure of the negotiations will have a far-reaching impact on the region and our relation. I have therefore instructed that a reassessment be made of US policy in the region, including our relations with Israel with the aim of reassuring that our overall American interests are protected.”

Within six months, Kissinger succeeded in brokering an interim accord between Rabin and Egyptian president Anwar Sadat whereby Israel agreed to pull back its forces out of the Jidda and Mitla passes but retained the heights above them while American forces were stationed in the passes.

Avner said that since that compromise was reached, no Israeli has been killed on the Israel-Egypt border.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mrs. CAPITO addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. SMITH of New Jersey addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

DEMOCRATIC SMALL BUSINESS AGENDA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker’s announced policy of January 6, 2009, the gentlewoman from Pennsylvania (Mrs. DAHLKEMPER) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mrs. DAHLKEMPER. Mr. Speaker, I look forward tonight in this next hour to discuss the Democratic small business agenda, one that I believe will really help to bring our country further out of the recession that we are now climbing out of. I am glad that some of my colleagues are able to join me tonight as we talk about this agenda going forward.

As our country struggles to overcome the effects of the financial crisis and economic recession, we must look for innovative ways to help create new jobs and foster private sector growth. We must act aggressively to counter

the job losses of the past 2 years. And those job losses have been great. More than 8 million jobs have been lost since the recession began in late 2007. Our Nation’s unemployment rate is near 10 percent, and in many areas well above 10 percent. Job losses are on the decline, which is good news amidst so many months of recession, but we still have a very long way to go.

The number of long-term unemployed individuals in the United States is extremely high, totaling 6.1 million people as of last month. That is 6.1 million people who have been out of work for 27 weeks or longer. That is nearly 7 months of unemployment. And approximately 2.5 million people are considered marginally attached to the labor force, meaning they want work, but because the job market is so uninviting they have not looked for work in the last 4 weeks.

One of our Nation’s greatest historical strengths has always been our optimism. But when faced with a long-term, gradual recovery, as we are today, it is understandable that patience wanes and it becomes difficult to retain the optimism that has served us so well in the past. That is why we must act aggressively and decisively to help our private sector grow and create jobs.

I believe the best place to start is the area of our economy that has the greatest record of success in creating jobs, and that is our small business sector. As a former small business owner—my husband is still running the business—I have seen firsthand the power of small businesses in our communities. A grocery store can transform an urban landscape, improve the health and lower crime in neighborhoods that others may have thought was a lost cause. A retail store or restaurant can energize a community by drawing patrons to lesser traveled areas. A small business can turn an empty street into a destination for customers and tourists. Manufacturers and producers can create hubs of commerce and employment when the jobs they create directly beget indirect jobs.

□ 1845

Manufacturers need supplies and equipment to create their products, and their workers need a place to eat lunch and to shop.

When small businesses grow and prosper, their communities reap the benefits. Small businesses are the engine of economic growth and job creation in the United States, and they’ve been for years. Over the last 15 years, small businesses have created over 65 percent of the Nation’s new jobs, approximately 14.5 million jobs. Small businesses represent 99.7 percent of all employer firms. That means less than 1 percent of our employers are big corporations.

Small businesses are the starting point for economic success. The small businesses of today are the success stories of tomorrow. It’s small businesses

that create the technologies that profoundly affect our lives and our culture—medical devices that regulate heartbeats, software that allows us to connect with people across the globe, products that rid our ground water of arsenic. These are just a few of the examples of innovations of small businesses.

The American entrepreneurial spirit will help drive our economy out of recession, creating jobs in innovation along the way. That is why we must do all we can to help businesses, small businesses, grow and prosper.

I would now like to yield to my good friend, Mr. TONKO from New York.

Mr. TONKO. Thank you for bringing us together this evening for this discussion on the small business agenda here in Washington.

Obviously, as has been stated so many times during this session of Congress, the number one priority is jobs, jobs, jobs, and jobs. We cannot over-emphasize the impact that job creation, job retention bears on the discussions that we have here in restoring this Nation’s economy.

And you make a very valid point in assessing the very deep loss of jobs that we experienced at the beginning of this administration. It was somewhere in the neighborhood of 700,000 to 750,000 jobs lost per month in the last 3 or 4 months before the Obama administration began its work here in Washington. That was a tremendous loss to this Nation’s economy. Millions upon millions, 7 to 8 million jobs lost during this recession. A very painful blow to the American economy and certainly to the American households across this Nation.

And as we look forward to progress to inspire us, it is good to note that while it’s not good enough, some 200,000 to 300,000 jobs lost in the last few months is a vastly improved outcome, a long way to go, but moving in the right direction. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act enabled us to place down payments in small business production and creation and retention. Certainly those efforts are coming in cutting-edge fashion where we’re now addressing job growth in a way that speaks to research and development, allowing us to spark an innovation economy that enables us to respond in very valid terms by embracing our intellectual capacity as a Nation.

These are the source of efforts that require our investment. And I am so impressed that we can move forward now with many issues that were back-burnered.

When we look at the need to produce here locally in this country, to produce nationally for our energy needs, nothing could be smarter than to move forward with a clean energy economy, to be able to draw down that gluttonous dependency on fossil-based fuels that has fed this system, that has enabled us in a way to continue to add to that carbon footprint. And we’re putting hundreds of billions of dollars per year

into the treasuries of unfriendly nations to the United States and our allies across the globe. That is not smart government. That is enabling us to continue along the course of status quo where we don't exercise the options available to us.

I look within my district. I look within the region that I represent and beyond in upstate New York, and there are such great things happening in nanoscience, in semiconductors, in superconductivity cable, in renewables, that we are now cultivating this climate that enables us to respond to a clean energy economy. It's growing our energy independence. It's growing our energy security, and therefore, favorably addressing our national security, because as we conduct these sorts of experiments and grow opportunities in the energy world, we are giving birth to wonderful startups, to entrepreneurs, and that is the spirit that is uniquely American, as you suggested.

So I'm very, very enthused about where we're heading. I believe that as we have stopped the bleeding of this recession, we now go forward with the toolkit that will enable our small business community to respond in fullest fashion where we embrace the intellect of this Nation and allow us again to taste that sense of pioneerism that is really, I think, the flame that really sparks America's comeback.

Mrs. DAHLKEMPER. I think the gentleman makes a great point.

As you talk about the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, I think the part of that bill that we maybe fail to get the message out there about is the reinvestment side. In the beginning, we were trying to help those who were hurting most, those who needed extension of unemployment or needed help with COBRA. But now we see many of our small businesses are actually involved in the reinvestment side as we're actually reinvesting in our economy.

One of the exciting things I got to see was a new biomass heating unit for three different businesses. One is a school district-owned business, one is a recreation center, and one is a career center in one of my communities. And I asked them about the project, \$3.2 million project, \$500,000 of that coming from the Reinvestment Act. And I asked them how important that money was to them, and they said that was what they needed to get over the hump. This is going to create new jobs in our region on the construction side, and then jobs beyond that.

But our small businesses will be involved in putting this whole new system in, and it's going to actually save a lot of money for these three organizations in the long run and take us, as you say, to a cleaner economy as we go forward.

So there certainly are some very exciting things. Our agenda really started with the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. And it is what has taken us out of the recession. And one

of the things we need to talk about is the aggressive agenda that we have, as Democrats, for small businesses, to give them the support they need to create jobs and speed the recovery.

And one of those is access to capital. I'm sure we all travel around our districts and hear from our small businesses that they can't get the capital they need. They want to grow their business. They see positive signs, and we need to be there. And our agenda, I think, is going to take them there. For every small business, they need capital to grow, and this is really the first piece of the puzzle. But the tight credit has limited their capacity. So we need to provide alternate means for small businesses to access capital to grow, and that's why we have a couple of different pieces of legislation.

One I have introduced, which is the Express Loans Improvement Act, H.R. 4598, to increase the availability and the utility of SBA express loans, a vital source of working capital for small businesses. And so I would certainly like to thank people who've come on that bill. And I want to thank particularly Congresswoman BEAN because she helped to introduce that legislation with me.

There are a number of other loans programs through the SBA that we're working to improve for our small businesses that will help them access the capital that will help them to grow.

Right now, I would like to yield to one of our newest Members from California, certainly a very welcome addition to our Democratic caucus and to Congress as a whole.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Thank you. I want to thank the gentlelady from Pennsylvania and the gentleman from New York for the opportunity to discuss this critical issue of small business and jobs.

We know the statistics are very bad. But the discussion you two were having a moment ago used the word "investment." And we talked about the American Reinvestment Act. It's now 13 months old. And it's absolutely critical that we always ponder investment because the investments that we can make at the government level will lead to short-term job growth as well as to long-term job growth and stability.

Years ago, we looked in California about how do you grow the California economy. I did a report on it. This was more than 25 years ago. And we noted that the history of California's great economic growth was centered on five things. The first and foremost of them was the enormous investment that was made in education, both in K-12 and community colleges and in the research institutions. It was that investment that gave the foundation. And here we are today with enormous disinvestment, backing away from that critical investment in education.

Now, the legislation that we talked about, the American Reinvestment Act, moved billions of dollars into the education sector so that we can con-

tinue to educate our kids at the universities and K-12 and the community colleges so that people who had lost their jobs could come back and learn the new skills, as you were saying, Mr. TONKO, the new skills in the green technology. Extraordinarily important investment in knowledge, investment in the ability of people to compete internationally.

Our friends on the Republican side say, No, we shouldn't have done that. So what are these people to do? They have lost their job. They don't have the opportunity to get new knowledge and new skills.

The second thing that we learned that was one that you also just talked about, the two of you a moment ago, about the necessity for research. It is in the research that the new jobs are created. Why? Because those are new products. Those are things that people demand and want and need for the growing economy. And in that is the high profit margin. And, again, for the first time, the Democratic Congress and the President—without the help of the Republicans—passed the greatest increase in research money in the last 20 years, putting money into research that will again lead to jobs sooner and later as the economy grows.

There are many other pieces of this. One that's before us is the health care legislation. I know a young couple in their mid-thirties that want to start their own business but they cannot leave the job that they have today because they know that as small business people, they will not be able to get health care insurance. They have two kids.

So these are things that we're bringing to the American public—last year, with the American Recovery Act and now this year, as we look at how we're going to deal with health care. These are the critical investments that we need to make. And I thank you so very much for bringing this to our attention, to the attention of the American public.

Mrs. DAHLKEMPER. I thank my friend from California.

Now I would like to yield to my friend from Michigan (Mr. PETERS).

Mr. PETERS. Thank you for yielding the time. Thank you, Mrs. DAHLKEMPER, for putting together and assembling this Special Order. And I would also like to thank Chairman LARSON, as well as Representatives SUTTON and HASTINGS, for chairing the House Jobs Task Force, of which I'm a member, and I think others are members of here tonight as well, which is doing very important work to make sure we are creating jobs in this country.

We all know that small businesses employ half of all private-sector employees, and are responsible for creating 60 to 80 percent of all new jobs over the last decade. They create more than half of our Nation's nonfarm GDP. Small businesses employ 40 percent of high-tech workers, and small businesses create 13 times more patents per

employee than large patenting firms. And improving access to credit is a key aspect of helping these small businesses grow and create jobs and ensure that America remains a global economic powerhouse.

I am pleased that the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act provided \$30 billion in tax relief for small businesses and increased the percentage a business can write off in capital expenditures by 50 percent. Additionally, the total amount a business can write out has been doubled to \$250,000, allowing for a substantial investment in equipment and resources for small businesses.

But much more, as we know, much more needs to be done to help our small businesses in this country.

Last year, I had the opportunity to host a field hearing in Oakland County, Michigan, where I gave borrowers and lenders an opportunity to discuss the challenges that we're facing in Michigan. Bank regulators attended the hearing as well so that we could hear firsthand their policies and how those policies are making it very difficult for banks to make the loans to very worthy businesses in my State. And I know it's not just a problem in Michigan, but in States all across the country now.

One of the biggest problems that borrowers and lenders outlined was that as their value of commercial real estate, manufacturing equipment, and other sources of collateral has dropped, it has made it very difficult to obtain a line of credit. Even for a company that has purchase orders in hand, it is difficult for them to get that money. That's why I'm working with Congressman LEVIN and Congressman DINGELL on legislation that will provide States with funding that they can use to create a collateral support program to make sure that these businesses get the vital lending that is so important for them.

That's why I have also proposed a small business lending plan that will redirect unspent Wall Street bailout funding to instead help small businesses in our communities so they can get the credit that they need to grow and to create jobs.

□ 1900

Efforts to help small businesses are especially crucial in areas of high unemployment. I was happy to author legislation through the Small Business Committee which I know, Representative DAHLKEMPER, you are a leader in, to provide zero-interest loans worth up to \$75,000 to small businesses in high unemployment areas, with payment on these loans deferred for 18 months. It also makes high unemployment areas eligible for the New Market Venture Capital program, providing strong financial incentive for investment in new and emerging industries in areas where the workforce is necessary to build the new economy and is ready and enthusiastic and just needs that additional help.

In addition to helping businesses access capital, we must make sure that they also have access to key partnership programs that are proven to spur job creation. For example, the Manufacturing Extension Partnership, the MEP, is a crucial national program that provides technical services and assistance to increase productivity and efficiency of small and medium-sized businesses. The Manufacturing Extension Partnership is a model of an efficient and effective program, credited with creating and retaining over 55,000 jobs per year and \$10.5 billion in increased or retained sales.

MEP support is vital to the long-term success and competitiveness of small and medium-sized American businesses, and preserving and strengthening the program should be a priority as Congress continues to work on reviving this economy and getting that growth going.

Currently, the costs of the MEP's services are shared between the Federal Government, State government and industry with Federal Government contributing one-third, and States and industries contributing the remaining two-thirds. However, State budgets have threatened the MEP's existence, and at least 23 State MEP centers now report a decrease or elimination of State MEP funding in 2009 alone, and some centers have been operating without State assistance for years. When a State eliminates this vital funding, it is left to small businesses to cover the gap, and they risk losing Federal dollars in those States that are being hurt the worst. That is why I have introduced legislation with Representative EHLERS that would reduce the matching requirements for small businesses to ensure that they can continue to participate in this MEP program.

And, finally, I would like to also announce that this afternoon I introduced, along with Chairman LARSON and Congressmen REICHERT and TIBERI, a bill entitled the "American Job Creation Investment Act" to provide business tax relief projected to create hundreds of thousands of new jobs. I would like to thank my colleagues for working with me on this bill and support from those of you here in the Special Order here tonight as well.

This bill in a sense will allow companies to use the alternative minimum tax credits that they now hold but that otherwise they must save for future years to be used this year for job creation, job retention, and capital investments. The bill is estimated to directly create over 65,000 new jobs and help businesses retain 170,000 jobs in the next 2 years, plus spur \$40 billion in additional job-creating investment. A wide array of industry associations currently endorse the bill, including the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the National Association of Manufacturers, the Motor and Equipment Manufacturers Association, Associated Builders and Contractors Association, and the Association for Manufacturing Technology.

This is an incredibly efficient and commonsense way for us to spur job creation. Companies are sitting on these tax credits, but under current tax law cannot use them until future years. This bill will allow them to use the tax credits they have already accrued to create jobs now, when we need them the most. And I would like to encourage my colleagues to cosponsor this very important bill.

While I'm proud of the work that we have done in Congress to turn around our economy and help families and small businesses, I think we all agree that there is no question that there is more work to be done. Small businesses will be the key to my State's, and the entire Nation's, economic recovery. And I believe, as I know all of you believe, that helping businesses have access to capital that they need to grow, invest and create jobs is the key to helping our economy move and put Americans back to work. I look forward to continuing to work with all of you and applaud your efforts here tonight to bring this important issue to the American people as we continue to work to create jobs in this great country.

Mrs. DAHLKEMPER. I thank my friend from Michigan who I know is just out there every day fighting for jobs in Michigan and fighting for this country to make sure that we have a robust and strategic plan going forward. And many of your pieces of legislation that you have brought forward will do that. I'm really glad you brought up MEP, the Manufacturing Extension Partnership, which I'm also a big fan of. I think that we need to make sure it is funded and funded in a way that our communities don't lose the funding if their States don't have the money. So I'm glad that you're working on that, and I appreciate your work in that area.

I'm also glad you brought up the Recovery Act tax relief. Again, there are so many parts about the Recovery Act that we don't talk about enough, and it gets stuck as "stimulus bill." I really like the "Recovery Act" name better. We need to talk about that recovery and reinvestment side, the tax relief that came to individuals, but the tax relief that came to small businesses to allow them to reinvest into their businesses continues on. And I think that is important not to forget those pieces.

I'm going to yield again to my friend from New York.

Mr. TONKO. Thank you, Representative DAHLKEMPER. And it is a pleasure to hear both Congressmen from Michigan and California and you as a Representative from Pennsylvania all speaking the voice of the freshman class. I'm so enthused to work with all of us as freshman Members of this Congress. We have brought, I believe, a lot of thought, a lot of energy, a lot of vision; and we are attaching it to the leadership of this House, which is broken from some of the failed attempts from the prior administration.

The entire focus on manufacturing through the MEP program was denied. There wasn't a respect shown, I believe, strong enough toward the manufacturing sector. And the American manufacturing sector is alive. It will be competitive on the global scene because it can do it smarter, and the investment of that intellectual capacity of this Nation gives us great promise with the manufacturing sector.

So to hear of all these ideas, from tax benefits that will go toward creating small business opportunities, to dealing with the credit crunch, making certain that we raise the loan opportunities to allow for the working capital needs to be met for our small business community, those are important aspects. Those are great factors.

H.R. 4598, which you are sponsoring, Congresswoman, is tremendous benefit to the opportunities to invest in small business, and they are the backbone of this American economy.

To the gentleman from California, when he spoke of health care, I talked to a number of small businesses that might have five, 10, 15 employees. And when they are insuring their employees for health care purposes, they are looking over a rather small base. And the bill that we are looking at before the House allows for an exchange to be developed where there is a large pool of employees, where there is going to be a regulatory environment to hold down those costs. And beyond that, if you have one employee of five or 10 impacted with catastrophic illness, you're probably going to see rate increases in your insurance rise exponentially. When you put them into a larger sea of employees, by operating through these exchanges, that's the kind of reform that is responding to the needs of small business.

We talked about it today in my office. People understand that concept. You put people's situations into a large audience, and it neutralizes the outcome in a way that spreads the pain and allows small business to continue to provide for their employees, which they want to do. We have decided in this country we are going to stay with an employer-based health care system. So let's provide the reforms that allow small business to have the benefit in that outcome. If we profess small business to be the vision of the future, to be the job growth market, certainly we have seen it in the last decade or two, 75 to 85 percent of all the new jobs created are coming through small business.

So let's be there in a user-friendly way that allows them to provide for their employees so that they have a healthy and strong workforce so that we can put together both the physical health care, mental health care concepts that will enable them to prosper, put together the funding opportunities dealing with that credit crunch. We saw what happened. The banks were not regulated. We saw the institutions out there collapse. It killed the Amer-

ican economy and the global economy. And the credit lines were dried up. They were exhausted for households and businesses. That is not good.

So now it is our challenge as Democrats to respond; and, I think, in many dimensions we are responding. We are going to open those credit lines. We are going to provide for that capital need to be met for the business community. We are responding. And people need to know that it's a full agenda from a jobs package to health care reform to energy reform, which is growing a clean energy economy, an innovation economy. These are the concepts that are going to provide the change that was long overdue and utilize the American know-how, the great pioneer spirit.

I represent a host of communities, a necklace as I like to refer to it, of mill towns. They were the epicenters of invention and innovation. That spirit still prevails in this country today. And we need to foster that kind of growth. We need to grow out of this recession, now that we have stopped the bleeding, and build this economy the way we envision it to be the most powerful, with small business at the front and center of that.

Mrs. DAHLKEMPER. I'm sure as the gentleman goes around his district, as my other colleagues do, and visits our small businesses, we see the innovation. It is exciting to go visit those small businesses in our region who are really doing some very amazing and innovative work.

Again, we have a robust and strategic agenda, the Democrats. And we have got to continue to work on this as we want to continue to help our small businesses. I think we have got a lot of good pieces in place and, as Mr. PETERS brought up, even more things that we are bringing forward.

I would like to yield again to the gentleman from California.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. TONKO, thank you so very much for weaving together all the pieces of the puzzle that the Democratic Party and this Congress are putting together. It is the education piece, the health care piece, and also there is another piece, and I'm going to use an example here of what is taking place in one of the counties I represent. It's Contra Costa County and the Contra Costa Council, which is made up of businesspeople who have said, let's use the purchasing power of government to incentivize and to help the small businesses.

Now, it happens that in this particular area, there are major research institutions. The University of California, the Lawrence Berkeley Lab, Lawrence Livermore Lab and the Sandia Lab are all in the area. And out of that comes enormous numbers of new ideas. But those ideas are often left without a real market because they are new and they haven't been able to grow and to develop their market. So the local government said, why don't we get together and become the purchaser and jump-start, use the pur-

chasing power of government, particularly in the area of energy conservation.

For example, street lights, there is a new company that is in the LED lighting system, and it's possible for that company, in their own neighborhood, to create a huge market, replacing the existing street lights. They use an enormous amount of energy with the new LED lights. But one example, in order to do that, that is the wise use of government. At the Federal level, billions upon billions of dollars are spent every year, often going to the large companies to what are known as the "Beltway Bandits," the companies that hover around Washington. We in the Democratic Party are doing this today, the Democratic Congress is pushing the President, pushing the administration to push those jobs back to the local community by contracting with small businesses.

The small business community needs access to the Federal contracts just as they would like to have access to the local government. That has been the policy of the Democratic Congress and is the policy of the Democratic President to make sure that small businesses have access to the Federal contracts. It doesn't come easy. I was the Deputy Secretary of the Department of the Interior in the 1990s, and we had to literally force the bureaucracies to contract with small business. It is like putting in reporting requirements. We are continuing that today.

So once again, there is a web of opportunities, education, health care, the tax laws, all of these things, including contracting and access to the Federal and local government purchasing power that creates opportunities for small businesses. That is our agenda, and it's a good agenda for America. It's a good agenda for business.

Mrs. DAHLKEMPER. Another piece of the legislation that we have passed through the House and the Senate, I believe, is taking it up tomorrow, is the HIRE Act, or the Hiring Incentives to Restore Employment Act, which includes tax cuts, again, for small businesses to invest, expand and hire more workers. It also takes on unemployment directly creating a payroll tax holiday for businesses that hire unemployed workers to create, we hope, some 300,000 jobs in our country and an income tax credit of \$100,000 for businesses that retain those employees. These tax cuts and credits are going to help our small businesses grow and push our unemployment rate down.

As I said, the Senate is considering this, I believe, tomorrow. So we will look forward to the Senate's passing that legislation and again getting that out to help our small businesses throughout this community.

As a consequence of our recession, small businesses are hesitant to invest in expansion in the current economic climate. So to encourage those investments, we must continue to offer those tax incentives to give our small businesses the comfort they need to have

to move forward and to grow their businesses, and, again, going back to making sure access to capital is there, the tax incentives, the MEP programs, even as our colleague from California talked about, the education facilities and making sure that there is a connection between our small businesses and our education institutes.

□ 1915

So that is an important piece that we can't forget about. There needs to be that good connection. I think many of our pieces of legislation are working to make sure that connection is there that wasn't always there. Sometimes there is a disconnect between what happens in the university setting and research and what happens in our manufacturing facilities. And I think we have worked really hard in some of our legislation, and we will again in our America Competes legislation that we are bringing now through the Science and Tech Committee that many of us sit on, we will be working to make sure that that connection is there. So it is another important piece.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Let me give you a very brief example of that connection.

The community colleges across this Nation are one of the very best places for people to get specific job training. When the community college is connected to the business communities, the business community can directly affect the educational program that that community college is providing, making the education pertinent to the employer so that when that employee finishes or when that worker finishes the community college program, they are specifically ready.

I was listening this last weekend when I was back in California to a local radio station talking about the way in which the community college and the employers are working together to educate unemployed construction workers, preparing them for the solar industry so that they knew how to install solar photovoltaic, so that they could be the salespersons, so that they can do the audits that are necessary, and those people would be immediately prepared. Now, the problem is the community colleges across this Nation are running out of money.

Now, Mr. MILLER, the chairman of the Education and Labor Committee, has proposed a new piece of legislation called the Local Government Jobs Act, and it has \$23 billion to directly go to the educational system so that they can hire the teachers, so that they can do the training in the community colleges to prepare workers for the new economy that is coming our direction. This is the kind of really important and useful legislation that is needed. Some 250,000 teachers would continue to be employed.

And I was noticing in the Washington Post today, the headlines, the right-hand column, "Thousands face furloughs; schools may lose millions." That is repeated. That same headline

was found in the Sacramento Bee and the Los Angeles Times in the last week.

So we need to support the educational system so that unemployed workers have the opportunity to become better prepared to take the jobs that will be there as these tax incentives, the new economy kicks in, as we move to the green technologies and the green energy systems. There is a totality here. There is a holistic approach.

That is what the Democratic agenda provides: tax incentives, health care, education, purchasing power of the government made available to small businesses, bringing the new businesses on line. All of these things create a totality that will restart our economy and keep us moving and take these workers that are now tax-takers on unemployment insurance, some on welfare, using the COBRA money that we provided through the American Recovery Act, and let them become taxpayers, building our economy once again. That is our agenda.

Thank you so very, very much for bringing this small business agenda to the American public so that they understand that this party, the Democratic Party, is the party that is concerned and is willing to use the power of government to restart our economy and to give small businesses an opportunity to prosper and grow.

Mrs. DAHLKEMPER. I thank the gentleman from California, who I know is very passionate about these issues. And we really appreciate your joining us tonight and being part of this discussion.

I have said for years that a strong economy really begins with a strong education system. We have got to have our students ready. STEM education, all the different aspects of education need to be there to make a strong student base that will then go on and be our next innovators and our next scientists and our next artists, because we need all those different aspects of our culture.

We have been joined by another member of our freshman class, from Florida. So representing the southern part of our country, I would like to now yield to the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. KOSMAS).

Ms. KOSMAS. Thank you very much. I thank you for yielding and for hosting this important forum on small business.

I appreciate the picture that has been painted here on the large issues nationally and how they are affecting our economy, but I come to speak from a personal perspective as a person who has been a small business owner, self-employed my entire adult life. And that means that in my community, most of my friends and colleagues are also small business owners small- to medium-sized business owners, and I recognize the things that are important to them. We recognize them, of course, as the engines of our economy.

And what we know for sure is that, over the last decade, 70 percent of new

jobs created in this country have been created through small businesses. That is why they are so critically important to us during this economic time. We want to ensure that they are able to survive and thrive, and I think we all are working together in order to make that happen. We recognize that the Recovery Act has been important to these small businesses and that measures have been introduced to help them have access to loans and to capital, but I know that in my district and in others, businesses are still struggling in order to access the capital that they need in order to grow and add jobs.

Just last week, I visited VaxDesign, which is a truly innovative biotech company, in my district, that wants to expand; but in order to do so, they are going to need to attract resources. And so what we really need to do is to take additional steps to open up the flow of capital to small businesses, and that is why I have introduced a bill that will eliminate the capital gains tax on long-term investments in small business stock. We have done that so that innovative companies can attract the long-term investors that they need and grow new jobs. We all recognize that that is a very important part of what we are trying to do during this particular economic downturn.

As was previously stated by Representative DAHLKEMPER, the House has recently passed legislation that plays an important role in providing a payroll tax break for businesses and also a \$1,000 credit for keeping new hires on, and these are very important incentives.

I have also introduced several other measures that I think are extremely important based on my experience in small business and my recognition of the issues that are important to them in my district. Some of these include incentives to encourage private sector investment in areas of high unemployment, which is a serious problem in many districts but about 12 percent in parts of my district. And while we have had these incentives in place in the past for low-income areas, we are now wanting to apply those incentives to high-unemployment areas.

I have long suggested that we should allow sole proprietors of small businesses to be able to deduct the cost of their health care, which they are not currently able to do. This has the benefit, of course, of providing them with a tax incentive but also encouraging them to have health care for themselves and their families.

We have introduced legislation that increases the new business startup deduction from \$5,000 to \$20,000, and also a Shop Act which we introduced that allows small businesses to pool together to purchase insurance.

Some of these, of course, will be taken care of in other ways and through other pieces of legislation, but they are important initiatives that I have personally taken on as part of my own agenda for my district.

We also passed an amendment to support the photonics industry through the Small Business Innovation and Research Act, and this is very key to central Florida, an area where that area is growing rapidly.

These are some examples of what I call common sense, and they are bipartisan solutions that I believe will help our small businesses spur investments and create jobs. And it would be my intention to continue to work with my colleagues and to try to continue to find new ways to increase opportunities for small businesses to grow and to hire more folks in central Florida and across the country.

I certainly am proud to be here this evening and concur with, as I say, the big picture that you have painted as to how small business is connected to the educational system, and the opportunity for innovation that grows out of small business is a very important component of how we see improving our educational system at all levels.

So I thank you again for bringing this issue before us and for the opportunity to speak tonight.

Mrs. DAHLKEMPER. I thank my friend from Florida for joining us. And one of the, I think, encouraging things that I have seen, we are all new Members here, but many of the new Members who came in in 2009 and also that came in in 2007 were small business owners at one point in their life and understand the issues that small businesses have to deal with. That actually gives great comfort to my small business owners back home when I tell them that we have actually started this Small Business Owners Caucus to talk about the issues from the small business owner perspective as we deal with legislation. And I think it is just important for people to understand the issues are different for small businesses than large businesses, and our agenda, the things that we have been talking about tonight, I think, bring forward the fact that we realize that and we are taking many steps here within our Democratic agenda to address those small business issues.

Mr. TONKO. Representative DAHLKEMPER, you know, you and our colleague from Florida sparked a thought as you were both talking about innovation and small business creation.

To the credit of the leadership in the House—and I have to credit Speaker PELOSI for really advancing the innovation economy. She believes in that investment. She understands that jobs are the greatest issue that are out there challenging this country in terms of providing the support that is required.

This Monday before I traveled here to the Nation's capital, while still in my district, I was invited to attend the 10th anniversary celebration of SuperPower, which is now producing all sorts of demonstrations in the high-temperature superconductive cable market.

As we talk about this energy system in our country, as we talk about cre-

ating our own American-produced supplies of power, we also need to remember there is a delivery system that needs our investment. The transmission and distribution system, the arteries and veins of the network, if you will, has been designed for monopoly settings. And as we have deregged in this industry, we now find that this country is not only wielding electrons from region to region but across State borders, across country borders as we look at importing power supplies from Canada.

So all that being said, the August 2003 failure that impacted the northeast of the United States, the eastern seacoast, States along the eastern seaboard, southeast Canada, millions, tens of millions of people in a blackout situation for days, if that didn't expose a gaping vulnerability of a weakness in this Nation, I don't know what would. So we need to invest in that delivery system. That is critical.

SuperPower, celebrating its 10th anniversary, is there producing high-temperature superconductive cable far more efficient than conventional cable where multiple times more electrons can be transmitted along the line.

As we look at the agenda in this country, there is no room for waste. I talked earlier about the gluttonous dependency on fossil-based fuels. If we can improve efficiencywise, we are going to be all the sounder as a Nation. So these great researchers and scientists are developing this cable.

They had in their display, at the Schenectady Museum for their 10th anniversary celebration, a piece of the cable that was used as a demonstration project in the city of Albany, New York, which proved successful. Now the work is to further develop so that we can commercialize this discovery and that we can drive down the cost so that it is truly an economic benefit. That is where R&D comes into play. It is all of that investment.

I truly believe that we, as a country, when investing in these efforts, create jobs from the trades on over to the Ph.D.'s. And when I looked at that, I realized that, here we have been investing. I was there at the front end of investment when we put down a bit of investment for capital purchases, for equipment for this startup. Now, 10 years later, they are doing great work. They are breaking their own records and are being recognized nationally and internationally.

So that has inspired me, along with conversations with small business innovators, entrepreneurs that are doing the same sort of signs and discovery that will change our response and responsiveness to a number of challenges out there.

I have introduced a bill that deals with the small business innovators. They are oftentimes in situations, scenarios that are high risk but high reward. And the angel network and the venture capital community even in this tough economy, especially in this

tough economy, is somewhat skittish about going out there, lending to them on their own.

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So government has a role here to soften that blow in those high-risk but high-reward situations. My bill would take the 2007–2008 success stories with the Department of Energy, where phase one and phase two investments have been made. Investments in prototyping. You develop an idea, you bring an idea to the table, you convince DOE it's a good project, and you develop that prototype. And then you test it. And there are many success stories where they have built the prototype and it met the test. But then we don't do the next and final stage, the third stage, which is invest to deploy it to commercialization. My measure would take those 2007–2008 success stories and—standing as inspiration is SuperPower. Ten years into it, they're breaking their own records. They're getting into demonstrations that have now been proven successful. We need to continue to invest. Now is not the time to walk away from that system. We need to invest in it. Certainly, we have potential that is limitless, and we need to go forward, and it responds to those present-day and future needs of this Nation and does it in magnanimous measure that produces jobs in every element, every sector of the workforce.

So these are the great investments. Just like we're investing in community colleges—where we'll have before us in the near future measures to invest in community colleges. One of my local community colleges is investing in clean room science technology. So that as we develop these “clean” rooms with the nanoscience industry with chips that are manufactured, they can then be coupled with everything from agriculture as an industry to the pharmaceutical industry to health care to energy. There's great potential there. And these are partnerships that need to be fostered by the government. This is a role where the government can produce jobs, because they're removing some of the risk, and they're there because all society benefits from these opportunities. They're great bits of discovery.

And to SuperPower, I publicly want to thank them for 10 years of a success story. And I know they're going to go on to even greater things where we can apply this into high-efficiency situations. Think of it. As we begin to grow our renewables out there with solar arrays, with solar farms, with wind farms, we are then able to take direct current cable, where there's a hundred percent efficiency, no line loss. So as you're taking that generated energy, American-produced energy, you're now making certain there's no loss of that product in its delivery mode. And we're all prospering from that.

These are the opportunities we're talking about. They were put on the

back burner. MEP was told, You don't need to be funded any more. Manufacturing doesn't need our attention. Nothing could be further from the truth. We need to invest in these industries. And we can do it because we have the know-how. We invest through higher education, we invest through apprenticeships with our trade unions. We do all of this investing, but then we need to provide the hope. And the hope comes in a job—in a business that's produced that translates into jobs.

Let's do it. Let's do it in a progressive, visionary way that enables all of us to prosper. And I'm so impressed that the Democrats are putting together a strategic plan that ranges from health care reform to job creation to incentives and tax relief and credit line opening, dealing with that credit crunch and putting together the workforce training. These are the elements. These are the tools in the toolkit that will take us to a new era of job creation—some jobs not yet on the radar screen. That's the remarkable bit of visioning here, of public policy development and resources that are put together in the budget.

So I can't thank you enough for the small business passion that you bring to this House, Representative DAHLKEMPER. Your track record as a small business person is that inspiration for you to then influence us in putting together packages that allow us to provide that opportunity from coast-to-coast for this great country.

Mrs. DAHLKEMPER. Well, Representative TONKO, I want to thank you because you have a lot of passion for small businesses and for job creation. You have been a great leader in our class and in this Congress. I'm excited about some of the new pieces of legislation I've heard about just here tonight—pieces of legislation that are coming out of the Democrats, coming out of particularly the freshman class of the Democrats, who I think have come to Washington with great ideas and with great solutions with how we can move forward.

You know, it was said that the Iroquois Indians, when they would make decisions, looked seven generations out. I'm not sure we're quite seven generations out, but we're looking out beyond next year, beyond the next election. We're looking out to the future and what is the best future for our country and how do we get there. We have to make sure we continue to make things in this country, as I know you and I both believe very strongly. We have to be innovators. We have to be the first in finding the new solutions to these issues that are huge but are so very important as we move our country forward.

Mr. TONKO. Representative DAHLKEMPER, I know that you've brought students to town. They've come from Pennsylvania from your district to visit. Today, I greeted students from Brown School in Schenectady, and as luck would have it, they came across

the Speaker. The Speaker had seen them in Statuary Hall, where all of these great figures remind us of leaders of this great country in our formative years, in our beginning years, where they spoke to a vision for the future. They are now those heroes that developed a strong sense of our past.

As she shared her thoughts with the students, she said to these eighth-graders, These are the giants that led us to today, but you're talking to Representatives here that are going to do the same thing. They're going to take us into the future. And the students understood. They understood that what we're doing here today is developing opportunity for them in a career path, in an education curve that will take them to higher ground and in job creation that will be there for them.

That is the challenge to each and every one of us as legislators—not to walk away from the crisis. A crisis is a terrible thing to waste. We have an opportunity here to take an economy that crumbled because of the lack of regulatory aspects, the lack of stewardship, the lack of watchdogs that could have kept it into working order. As that collapsed, this President offered a Recovery Act, and it stopped the bleeding. Now the awesome task is to build the economy we believe is strongest, that will be most responsive to the needs of this Nation. And when we look at it the investment in technology from health care, with all sorts of record-keeping done with technology, to education, wiring—hardwiring our communities with broadband and communications, creating opportunities, and energy generation and energy transmission, smart grids, smart metering—all of these opportunities that were denied are now front and center.

And so it's been a pleasure to join with you this evening to talk about not only growing out of this recession with soundness, but developing small business. Jobs, jobs, and hope for America's people. Thank you so much for your leadership. It's a great freshman class and I'm proud to be a part of it.

Mrs. DAHLKEMPER. It is a great freshman class. We have leaders in the great freshman class who will take us to that future and to the future that those students are looking forward to. I want to thank you all and all of my freshman colleagues who have joined me.

I do want to share just a few examples of some successful small businesses from my district, the Third District of Pennsylvania. Ibis Tek is a veteran-owned small business located in Saxonburg, specializing in products and accessories critical to the defense industry. Ibis Tek designs, manufactures, and tests important equipment such as transparent armor solutions for tactical and security vehicles; radio and video communication for unmanned ground vehicles; and emergency rescue devices for quick vehicle access and rescue. It's one of the many

companies in my district that are providing quality equipment to keep our troops safe. And for having been both in Iraq in Afghanistan over this past year, we certainly want to do everything we can to keep our troops safe. I'm just very proud that a company in my district is working on the latest innovation that's going to help do that.

Combined Systems is located in Jamestown. It's an engineering, manufacturing, and supply company of tactical munitions and crowd control devices globally that is given to law enforcement, corrections, and homeland security agencies. It is not only in defense that small businesses in western Pennsylvania are excelling. CCL Container in Hermitage is a leading manufacturer of recyclable aluminum products. They produce recyclable aerosol cans, aluminum bottles, barrier systems, and other specialty aluminum packaging. Since 1991, CCL Containers has been creating innovative solutions for product packaging that can be found in just about every home, from your beverages, cleaning products, hair products, and any number of goods that come in packages, using recycled aluminum, which is really great as we look to our future.

Just last December, a new small business came to Erie, Pennsylvania—Donjon Shipbuilding and Repair. Donjon Marine Company chose our region to expand their business because of the strong manufacturing base and expertise that I know you have in your region in New York State also. They're a welcome addition to Erie's business community and to a revitalization of using the lake that we have in front of us.

Finally, I'd like to highlight a small business in my district that's been serving our community since 1876, Hodge Foundry. You're going to be excited about that because they're actually working in the wind industry producing the castings for those very large poles that go up to the windmills. With 130 years of expertise, they produce some of the world's largest engineered iron castings right in my home district in Mercer County.

Mr. Speaker, it's small businesses like these that build the products and create jobs that change people's lives and move our economy forward. We must act swiftly here in Congress to enact legislation that will help our existing small businesses grow and hire new workers. We must create pathways for startups and entrepreneurs to turn their ideas into those successful businesses that I just mentioned and my colleagues have mentioned tonight. Small businesses are our investment in our communities and our entire Nation. I urge my colleagues to support the robust and strategic Democratic small business agenda that will help our businesses gain access to capital, create jobs, and develop the technologies and innovations that will move America forward.

It's very exciting to be here at this point in our history. I think our freshman class is a big part of the forward movement in this great agenda that we have. So I thank my colleagues, and I yield the rest of my time.

HEALTH CARE REFORM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2009, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BURGESS) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. BURGESS. I thank the Speaker for the recognition. Well, here we are, Tuesday night, Washington, D.C., 20 minutes until eight o'clock in the evening. What a day we have had here in the Capitol. Mr. Speaker, many of your constituents and my constituents probably tried to call our offices today to register how they felt about this health care bill. I know I have been encouraging people, whether they agree with me or not, whether they think I'm spot on or all wet, I have been encouraging people to call and let Congress know what you think about this massive government takeover of one-seventh of our Nation's economy. And people have responded. They have been calling.

But today they were met with either busy signals or interminable rings, because apparently the House switchboard was overwhelmed with the calls that were coming in. I will tell you I was concerned because I called my number for my office and got a busy signal, and yet walking around in the office, certainly not all of the phones were in use. So apparently this problem that Americans have encountered all afternoon has been one that has at its root and its cause in the antiquated House switchboard. I do hope the Speaker, I hope the Architect of the Capitol, and the Capitol business manager, will take that into account, because clearly, clearly we need to be able to hear from our constituents when we have such important legislation coming up to the floor.

So where are we as we work through this? Are we in the last throes? Are we still in for a long, hard slog? We have heard terms like the final push, the final stretch, the 5-yard line. President Obama, Speaker PELOSI, and Majority Leader REID have ignored calls by certainly every Republican, by many Democrats, many independent Americans, and just the American people in general, to really put the breaks on this current bill and to look at some of those things that people really want to see done, and do those.

We don't have a lot of credibility right now in the United States Congress. Recent polls I think today put it around 17 percent. No one trusts us with a 1,000-page bill that we passed out of committee last July 31. They darn sure didn't trust us with a 2,000-page bill that the Speaker's office came up with in October and that we

passed in this House in early November. They darn sure didn't trust the 2,700-page bill that passed in the Senate on Christmas Eve. And they sure don't trust what they see as a very difficult, tortured process that is now working its way through the House. And the reason they're having to resort to such legislative hijinks is because fundamentally this is a flawed bill. This is a bad bill. And it didn't have to be this way.

Look, most of us went home during August. We did our summer town halls, as we always do. We were all, I think, somewhat astonished at the outpouring of the American people just showing up on a hot Saturday morning in Texas to stand in a parking lot and listen to their Representative and question their Representative about what they saw happening up on Capitol Hill. To be sure, cap-and-trade was in the news those days; to be sure, the stimulus bill was in the news those days. But they were most concerned about this massive takeover of health care. Most of the questions dealt with that. And it wasn't like they didn't want to see anything done. But they didn't trust us to overhaul the entire system with one massive bill.

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Sure, they want some help with pre-existing conditions. Yeah, they'd like to see people be able to buy across State lines and bring some cost down. Maybe some liability reform would be nice. Boy, wouldn't it be great if COBRA was a little more flexible. These were the things we heard. When we came back in September, I thought, okay, rewind, pause, slow this thing down, and let's look at it. Maybe let's work together. Maybe Republicans and Democrats can kind of come to some common ground because every Democrat was hearing the same stuff I was hearing. And I know that because I saw it on the evening news. I saw the YouTube clips. Their town halls in Florida, their town halls in Arkansas, their town halls in Michigan were exactly the same as the town halls that were going on in north Texas. There was no difference.

But instead in September, we come to a joint session of the House and the Senate. The President came and addressed us, and it was nothing of the sort that we're going to rework this process. We weren't going to check the weather. We're going to fly anyway, full speed ahead. Let's get this thing done. I think I heard it said again tonight in the discussion that just preceded us, A crisis is a terrible thing to waste; so let's take this economic crisis that we're in and force this health care bill on the American people. They don't know what's good for them, but we do; and this is what they're going to get.

It is a terrible bill. It's a flawed bill. It's a very tortured process. I'm going to do everything in my power to stop it, but it may become law. And if it

does, we need to know what's in it, and we need to know then what our next steps are to deal with those bad provisions that are contained within the bill.

I've been joined tonight on the floor by a gentleman that I've come to admire during my time in Congress. He has been a leader on this issue and on the committee in which we jointly serve, Energy and Commerce, and here on the House floor. JOHN, did you have some thoughts you wanted to share with us tonight?

Mr. SHADEGG. I do. I want to thank the gentleman for conducting this special hour, and I want to talk about a number of issues that you have already referenced. Number one, health care reform: I certainly think we need health care reform. I know you do. I know that we believe that while the current system provides very high-quality health care, it often denies people access. But I want to talk a little bit about what's in the bill as well. The gentleman talked about this massive takeover.

One of the things that stuns me more than anything else—and I know that you find this confusing—is that the proponents of this bill say that Republicans are defending the health insurance companies in America. Really? Really? This bill says that we're going to enact a mandate, an individual mandate compelling every American to buy health insurance from the health insurance companies that are selling them health insurance now. Huh? I'm sorry, I find that a little confusing.

There is an individual mandate that says if this bill passes and becomes law, as the Speaker would like to do this week, you—every single American, every American listening tonight—must go out and buy health insurance from the very health insurance companies that are ripping us off right now. Why? Why in God's name would we want to force Americans to buy health insurance from the same health insurance companies that are ripping us off right now?

This is a massive subsidy to those health insurance companies. It's a law. It will be the law of the land that says, you must, whether you want to or not, buy a government-approved health insurance plan from one of the companies selling health insurance right now. If they were doing a great job of selling health insurance right now, wouldn't the cost be affordable? Wouldn't they be holding down cost? Wouldn't they be giving us good service? Wouldn't they not be cheating us? I've got to tell you, I don't know any Republican who thinks that it's a great idea to compel people to buy health insurance from the same insurance companies that are selling us health insurance now. And yet that's what the individual mandate in this bill does.

I guess they like it because it has been applied in Massachusetts. In Massachusetts they passed a mandate like this. They said that every single person