
MIDDLE CLASS JOBS AND OPPORTUNITY AGENDA

U.S. Representative Ann McLane Kuster
NEW HAMPSHIRE'S SECOND CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT



JANUARY 2014

MIDDLE CLASS JOBS AND OPPORTUNITY AGENDA

- ✓ TRAINING A HIGHLY-SKILLED WORKFORCE
- ✓ FOSTERING INNOVATION
- ✓ STRENGTHENING MANUFACTURING
- ✓ SUPPORTING SMALL BUSINESS
- ✓ BUILDING 21ST CENTURY INFRASTRUCTURE
- ✓ REDUCING THE DEFICIT IN A BALANCED WAY
- ✓ INCREASING ECONOMIC SECURITY
- ✓ PROTECTING THE NEW HAMPSHIRE ADVANTAGE

Dear Friend,

It has been a profound honor to represent you in Congress. Over the past year, I've had the opportunity to travel to every corner of our congressional district – from Keene to Concord and Pittsburg to Pelham – to hear your stories, listen to your ideas, and discuss our shared goals for New Hampshire.

The hardworking families I've met along the way aren't asking for much. They want what we all want: a good job that pays the bills, the chance to own a home, a quality education for our children, and a secure retirement. They don't expect government to hand them that life or solve every problem. But they do expect their representatives to put partisanship aside and focus on what really matters: helping create jobs and opportunity for middle class New Hampshire families.

That has been my top priority since the day I took office one year ago. In the weeks and months since, I've visited community colleges that are teaching our students and workers the skills they need to compete for well-paying jobs. I've toured manufacturers that are growing our economy and shipping their products to customers all over the world. I've met with researchers and scientists who are on the cutting edge of innovation and discovery. I've heard from small business owners who are creating jobs and who embody the entrepreneurial spirit that sets our state apart. And I've spoken with students, workers, and families who just want a fair shot to pursue their dreams.

In the following pages, I share several of their stories, highlight some of my work over the past year, and lay out my vision for the path forward. Together, these reflections make up my ***Middle Class Jobs and Opportunity Agenda***. It's a blueprint that's focused on common sense, bipartisan steps we should take to grow our economy and create jobs and opportunity for middle class Granite Staters – from doubling down on investments in innovation and job training, to streamlining and consolidating government programs, to protecting the New Hampshire Advantage. This is not an exhaustive to-do list, but rather the beginning of an important and ongoing conversation about the direction of our state and our economy.

I hope you'll take a moment to read about my work over the past year, and share your thoughts on what you would like me to focus on in 2014. Contact information for my four offices is listed below, as well as at the end of this document. I would love to hear from you, so please give me a call, or send me a letter, email, or fax. Or, stay in touch through social media and my website: <http://www.kuster.house.gov>.

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Thank you for everything you do to make New Hampshire such a special place to live.

Sincerely,



“CONGRESS AT YOUR COMPANY”

LISTENING TO NEW HAMPSHIRE BUSINESSES

I’ve always believed that the best ideas for how to create jobs and opportunity for middle class families don’t come from Washington – they come from hardworking business owners and community leaders right here in New Hampshire. That’s why, during my first month in office, I launched my ongoing “Congress At Your Company” series to hear directly from entrepreneurs, workers, and others about how the federal government can foster job creation and economic growth across New Hampshire.

We all know that the private sector – not the government – is the primary engine of job creation in our economy. But what the government can and should do is create an environment that helps our businesses expand, create jobs, and grow the economy. And to do that, it’s essential that Congress understands the challenges and opportunities businesses are facing on the ground.



Over the course of the past year, my “Congress At Your Company” series has taken me to more than 30 New Hampshire companies. These visits have been an invaluable way for me to hear directly from businesses and employees about how the federal government can help them succeed, and also how sometimes the government gets in the way of their success. In fact, many of the ideas included in my *Middle Class Jobs and Opportunity Agenda* grew out of conversations I had with business owners and others during my travels across the Granite State.

In 2013, I met with staff at businesses throughout the Second Congressional District, including:

- Airmar Technology Corporation (Milford)
- BAE Systems (Nashua)
- Burgess Biopower (Berlin)
- Cirtronics (Milford)
- Corfin Industries, LLC (Salem)
- Diamond Hill Farm (Concord)
- Garland Mill Timberframes (Lancaster)
- Geophysical Survey Systems, Inc. (Salem)
- Gorham Paper and Tissue (Gorham)
- Henniker Brewing Company, LLC (Henniker)
- Hitchiner Manufacturing Co., Inc. (Milford)
- HP Hood LLC (Concord)
- Hypertherm, Inc. (Lebanon)
- Innovative Foto (Salem)
- Kheops International (Colebrook)
- Knappe & Koester, Inc. (Keene)
- Littleton Coin Company (Littleton)
- LL Cote Sports Center (Errol)
- Microspec Corporation (Peterborough)
- Monadnock Food Co-op (Keene)
- North Country Smoke House (Claremont)
- Omni Components Corp. (Hudson)
- Pete & Gerry's Organic Eggs, LLC (Monroe)
- Polartec, LLC (Hudson)
- Rotobec USA, Inc. (Littleton)
- Santa's Village (Jefferson)
- The Seven Barrels Brewery (West Lebanon)
- Tender Corporation (Littleton)
- W.H. Bagshaw Co., Inc. (Nashua)
- Whaddy.com (Hudson)
- White Mountain Lumber (Berlin)

TRAINING A HIGHLY-SKILLED WORKFORCE

In order for New Hampshire workers to compete for and win the jobs of today and tomorrow, we need to train and secure a highly-skilled workforce that's second to none. New Hampshire is already home to some of our country's hardest workers and most innovative thinkers – and I want to make sure we keep it that way and continue to lead the nation. To do that, we must redouble our efforts to strengthen workforce development for our students and workers, and ensure that higher education – whether a certificate, four year diploma, or graduate degree – is within reach of every person who is willing to work for it.

Strengthening Workforce Development

“Our most important resource is our labor force, and a big challenge for us is access to skilled labor. There is a shortage in our area of machinists who are skilled at running the types of CNC machines that we have in our factory. In some cases, we have been able to bring in entry level employees and train them. We’re working with our local community college to bridge some of the gaps in their skills so we can accelerate their learning... Having these partnerships with community colleges will be effective for the continued development of our workforce.” - Aaron Bagshaw, President, WH Bagshaw Co., Inc (Nashua, NH)

When I ask New Hampshire business leaders what they need to succeed, one of the first issues they raise is the importance of training a highly-skilled workforce. Through my “Congress At Your Company” series, I have met Granite State employers who are looking to hire but can't find workers with the right skills for the job. At a time when so many of our friends and neighbors are struggling to find work, that simply shouldn't be the case. To help connect local job seekers with

employers looking to grow their businesses and hire new workers, I hosted a ***Career and Opportunities Fair*** in Nashua this past November. I was proud to see over two dozen employers and nearly 300 Granite Staters participate in this event.

Our government can and should play a leading role in bringing employers and educators together to help bridge this “skills gap,” fill vacancies, and get people back to work in good, middle class jobs. When we invest in our workforce, more young people will stay here in New Hampshire, our students will be more competitive in the job market, and our businesses will be more successful in the global economy.

Over the past year, I met with local students, educators, and employers to discuss how we can better prepare our workers and graduates for the 21st Century economy. Last spring, I visited with students and staff at Nashua Community College, New Hampshire Technical Institute, Keene State College's Regional Center for Advanced Manufacturing, and other educational institutions to learn more about their innovative efforts to prepare our students for the workplace.



Discussing college affordability at Plymouth State University

Educators like these are leading the way in collaborating with employers to improve workforce training. To encourage even more of these types of public-private partnerships, I introduced the ***Workforce Development Investment Act***. The first legislation I authored in Congress, this bill would provide up to \$10,000 in annual tax credits to businesses that partner with community colleges and other educational institutions to improve job training for students. Through this legislation, tax credits would be made available to employers who collaborate with educators to help develop curriculum, assist with classroom instruction, and offer hands-on educational opportunities for students.

Keeping Higher Education Within Reach

Higher education is one of the surest pathways to a good job and middle class lifestyle. Of the 30 occupations projected to grow the fastest over the next decade, more than half require post-secondary education.

As I speak with parents and students across New Hampshire, they consistently raise concerns with the sky-high and rapidly growing cost of higher education. According to the Project on Student Debt, New Hampshire students graduate with an average debt of over \$32,698—the second highest of any state in the country. We want to be first in the nation, but not for this.

As the mother of two college-age sons, I know full well that soaring costs are one of the biggest obstacles standing between middle class families and higher education.

To hear firsthand about the importance of affordable student loans to New Hampshire families, last summer I hosted roundtables with students and staff at Plymouth State University, River Valley Community College, and other schools across the Granite State. I also joined thousands of Granite Staters in June for a telephone town hall, where I heard directly from families and students who are saddled with debt and discussed how we can work together to tackle the skyrocketing cost of higher education.

After hearing moving stories from students and families across New Hampshire, I cosponsored the ***Student Loan Relief Act***, legislation that would extend more affordable interest rates for subsidized Stafford student loans. I also helped pass into law the ***Bipartisan Student Loan Certainty Act***, which will protect New Hampshire students from harmful rate hikes and give Congress time to work on a comprehensive, bipartisan plan to address college affordability over the long-term.

Getting Veterans Back to Work

Military service members who defend our freedom should never have to fight to find employment when they return home. When the brave men and women of our Armed Forces transition back to civilian life, they deserve our full support—including opportunities to quickly find good jobs.

In November, 2013, the unemployment rate for veterans who served on active duty since September, 2001 was 9.9 percent – a full 3.5 percent more than the rate for nonveterans. This is

inexcusable. Our military is second to none, and we owe it to our returning heroes to do everything we can to help them find rewarding jobs where they can utilize their skills. To that end, I helped introduce the *Troop Talent Act*, legislation that would improve the alignment of specialty skills acquired in the military with civilian certifications and licenses required for post-service employment. With this legislation, more veterans would be able to use credentials obtained in the military to acquire well-paying jobs in the civilian workforce.

FOSTERING INNOVATION

New Hampshire is home to some of the most innovative researchers and businesses in the country. As Granite Staters, we pride ourselves on keeping our state at the cutting edge of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. To remain at the forefront of innovation within these fields and others, it's critical that we continue to invest in the type of research and development that has already made New Hampshire a national and global leader.

Investing in Research and Development

As I meet with business leaders through my “Congress At Your Company” series, I am continually amazed by the innovative, cutting edge work taking place right here in New Hampshire. From harnessing woody biomass for renewable power, to supplying our military with state-of-the-art electronics, to leading the way in the latest medical research, Granite State employers and educators are at the forefront of the innovative work that will maintain our international status as a magnet for investment and job creation.

Unfortunately, over the past year manufactured political crises in Washington have threatened this progress. In speaking with business leaders, many have rightly shared their frustrations over the uncertainty caused by Washington, especially in regards to our tax laws. The U.S. tax code is too long, too complicated, and too unpredictable, with many key credits and provisions scheduled to expire every year. This chaotic landscape makes it almost impossible for businesses to make long-term plans about where and how to invest.

One such temporary tax provision important to New Hampshire businesses is the research and development (R&D) tax credit. I know the future of New Hampshire's economy depends on continued investments in cutting edge research,



Touring Hitchiner Manufacturing Co., Inc., in Milford

which is why I have cosponsored the **Research and Development Tax Credit Extension Act**. This legislation would both expand and make permanent the research and development tax credit, an essential tool that helps maintain our nation's leadership in the global innovation economy.

Securing Access to Global Talent

“New Hampshire has the ninth highest concentration of tech employment of all 50 states. And our thriving advanced manufacturing and high technology sector is absolutely dependent on highly skilled immigrants with degrees in STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) fields, as well as computer science.” - Jim Roche, President, Business and Industry Association (BIA)

We all benefit when the world’s most gifted inventors and innovators pursue their dreams in the United States. Rather than displacing American workers, foreign-born entrepreneurs who help grow American businesses are creating jobs and opportunities for workers in New Hampshire and across our country.

American success stories like Google, Yahoo, and eBay were all founded or cofounded by business leaders born outside the United States. To guarantee that the world’s great innovations continue to grow businesses in America, we need a 21st Century immigration system that attracts the world’s most highly-skilled workers. And to ensure that the next century’s greatest minds are educated in the United States, we must expand investments in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education programs.

That’s why I helped introduce the ***Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act***. Among other provisions to comprehensively reform our immigration laws, this legislation would help American businesses recruit international talent by increasing the availability of work visas for highly-skilled workers. Importantly, this bill would also create a new STEM Education and Training Account to help prepare American workers for jobs in the global innovation economy.

Maintaining Our Scientific Leadership

In addition to encouraging private sector R&D, we must also protect federal investments that drive cutting edge research at Dartmouth, the University of New Hampshire, and research institutions across our state and country. In 2012 alone, the National Institutes of Health (NIH) invested more than \$91 million in research funding to New Hampshire that helped fuel innovation. Not only does this funding help develop better tools to effectively detect, manage, and potentially cure a wide range of diseases, but it also supports thousands of high-quality jobs in the Granite State.

From medical tubing and stents to syringes and microscope slides, New Hampshire businesses are providing the advanced equipment and devices needed by researchers and medical professionals all across the country. This funding is critical for New Hampshire and the United States to maintain international leadership in biomedical and pharmaceutical research. This is why I have consistently fought to secure robust funding for the NIH and its critical mission.

STRENGTHENING MANUFACTURING

With our skilled workforce, first class universities and community colleges, successful public-private partnerships, and high-tech businesses, the Granite State is at the forefront of an American manufacturing renaissance. New Hampshire is home to approximately 2,100 manufacturing companies. By making smart, targeted investments and promoting programs that help our manufacturers succeed, we can keep our manufacturing sector growing and creating good, middle class jobs for years to come.

"Advanced manufacturing harnesses significant training and well-honed skills to develop highly specialized products in industries such as aerospace, life sciences, medical devices, semi-conductors and nano-technology... Despite the opportunities involved, however, advanced manufacturing still faces substantial image and public policy challenges. Employers are actually struggling in some cases to fill high-paying jobs, with an estimated 3,000 to 4,000 advanced-manufacturing positions in New England left unfilled at one recent point." - James T. Brett, President and Chief Executive Officer, the New England Council

Making New Hampshire a Hub for Innovation

During business visits through my “Congress At Your Company” series, I have met manufacturers who are eager to partner with universities and other institutions to tackle challenges facing our entire economy, such as workforce development. While many manufacturers are already working with academia and other businesses to develop technology and best practices, there is enormous untapped potential for greater collaboration throughout our manufacturing supply chain.

Shortly after taking office, I started working to secure an ***Institute for Manufacturing Innovation*** in New Hampshire. As proposed by President Obama's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology, this regional hub would be one in a network of public-private partnerships dedicated to sharing industrial, research, and infrastructure

resources between manufacturers and academics – just the type of collaboration we need to create more good, middle class jobs and spur economic growth.



These partnerships would be structured to benefit participating businesses throughout the supply chain that would gain from industry-wide advances in technology development and demonstration. Since making an initial push for a New Hampshire Institute in March, I am proud to have partnered with local businesses and other New England lawmakers to formally advance this initiative, and I will keep pushing to make it happen in 2014.

*Producing Goods and Services in
New Hampshire*

We have a long and proud tradition of manufacturing quality goods in New Hampshire, from textiles to high-tech components. Workers on factory floors across the second district can confirm a simple truth: when we make more products in America, more middle class families will have the opportunity to ‘make it’ in America.

To refocus Congress on job creation and domestic manufacturing, I am proud to have partnered with my colleagues to advance a comprehensive *Make It In America* legislative agenda. This includes legislation like the *Security in Energy and Manufacturing (SEAM) Act*, a common sense bill I support to extend tax credits and grants to companies constructing, expanding, or retrofiting

facilities that manufacture components used in renewable energy systems. As we continue to make advancements in developing alternative energy, investments like these in our domestic manufacturing base will help secure U.S. leadership in this competitive global industry.

Another *Make It In America* bill I have cosponsored is the *Bring Jobs Home Act*, which would help reverse the outsourcing trend that has sent so many U.S. jobs overseas. To encourage reinvestment in our nation, this legislation would provide a 20 percent tax credit for insourcing expenses incurred for relocating businesses to the United States. In addition, this bill would close a tax loophole and prevent businesses from deducting outsourcing expenses from their taxes.

SUPPORTING SMALL BUSINESS

Small businesses are the backbone of our economy, accounting for more than 90 percent of employers in New Hampshire. As a member of the *Small Business Committee*, I have met with entrepreneurs all across our state who continually inspire me with their innovative approach to solving problems, serving their customers, and creating jobs. To grow our economy, Congress must do everything it can to make life easier for small businesses looking to expand and hire.



Discussing the need for tax relief at Henniker Brewing Company

Prioritizing Technical Assistance

“There is an ever increasing demand for Small Business Development Center business advising services, and we appreciate Congresswoman Kuster's commitment to making these services available to as many New Hampshire entrepreneurs as possible.” - Mary Collins, State Director, New Hampshire Small Business Development Center

The small businesses that power New Hampshire's economy often face daunting challenges. Many need help getting off the ground, and for some even a modest amount of technical assistance can make the difference between thriving and folding. That's why I have been an outspoken supporter of the ***Small Business Development Center (SBDC) program***, a collaboration between the Small Business Administration (SBA) and local

stakeholders like the University of New Hampshire.

In 2012 alone, New Hampshire's SBDC helped over 800 businesses, leading to 40 new business starts and over 300 jobs created. After hearing firsthand from Granite Staters about the importance of SBDC assistance, I fought to prioritize funding for this vital program to ensure our small businesses have access to the resources and support they need to succeed.

Boosting New Hampshire Exports

To grow New Hampshire's middle class, we need to produce and sell more goods and services to middle class consumers all around the world. One important tool to help achieve this goal is the SBA's State Trade and Export Promotion (STEP) program, which is designed to grow the number of American businesses exporting their products and

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increase the value of U.S. exports on the global market. To date, New Hampshire has already received nearly \$600,000 in federal funds through this program, which has helped dozens of Granite State companies expand their exports, create jobs, and grow our economy.

The STEP program has helped businesses attend international trade shows, supported export training programs, and assisted with the development of international marketing materials, among other efforts to boost American exports. Despite its proven record in New Hampshire assisting businesses like Innovative FOTO in Salem, Congress allowed the authorization for this successful program to expire.

That's why I introduced the *Small Business Growth through Exports Act*, legislation that would extend and expand the STEP program to help even more New Hampshire companies boost their exports and create jobs. To help New Hampshire businesses access financing and other export assistance, I also hosted an *Export Forum* with the United States Export-Import Bank to discuss strategies for boosting international sales.

Increasing Access to Capital

Affordable capital is the lifeblood of small businesses, many of which are dependent on loans to sustain their daily operations. When credit dries up and lenders raise interest rates—or stop lending altogether—it's small businesses that suffer the most. That's why it's so important to facilitate access to capital for small business so they have the resources they need to hire, expand, and succeed.

As a member of the Small Business Committee, I am always looking for common sense ways to improve government programs that aren't working and build on those that are working well. To that end, I helped introduce the *Small Business*

Investment Company (SBIC) Modernization Act. This bipartisan legislation would expand the SBIC program, an important tool that leverages private funding to increase investments in small businesses. This program has operated successfully for over fifty years and operates at *zero cost to taxpayers*—a model that should be leveraged and replicated across the federal government.

Reducing Unnecessary Regulatory Burdens

One concern I have heard time and time again from business leaders is the need to reduce and simplify federal regulations. Too often, well-intentioned rules lead to unintended and sometimes harmful consequences. These types of overly burdensome regulations are especially damaging to small businesses, which have fewer resources to allocate toward navigating and complying with complex government rules.

We need Congress and federal agencies to work together to thoughtfully tailor new rules, and to review, revise, or repeal existing regulations that impose undue burdens on our economy. That's the collaborative approach Granite Staters expect and deserve. And that's exactly the type of process I helped facilitate in New Hampshire when local farmers raised concerns about the impacts new Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations could have on our state's small and organic farms.

To ensure Washington is listening to New Hampshire, I helped lead our congressional delegation and other lawmakers in bringing the FDA to New Hampshire to hear directly from local farmers about ways to improve its proposed regulations. Because of our efforts, the agency held a public forum in Hanover and went to work incorporating feedback they heard from local farmers into their proposal.

BUILDING 21ST CENTURY INFRASTRUCTURE

New Hampshire and America can't lead in the 21st Century economy with a 20th Century infrastructure. And when I meet with local elected officials and business leaders, they routinely highlight the need to redouble our investments in infrastructure. This is a priority not just for New Hampshire, but for our entire nation. In its 2013 Report Card for America's Infrastructure, the American Society of Civil Engineers gave our nation an embarrassing "D+" for its public infrastructure—a troubling sign for the future of American competitiveness. Our state did only slightly better in the most recent scorecard, earning a "C" for having over 300 structurally deficient bridges and needing over \$2 billion in water infrastructure investments.

"By rebuilding our infrastructure... we can create good jobs with good benefits and provide relief to our struggling working and middle class." – Mark MacKenzie, President, New Hampshire AFL-CIO

Promoting Public-Private Partnerships

Our roads, bridges, airports, electrical grid, and other components of our state and national infrastructure are the foundation on which our economy is built. For businesses to expand and create jobs, it's vital that we repair and strengthen the shared infrastructure needed to transport goods, people, and power.

That's why I'm a cosponsor of the ***Partnership to Build America Act***, bipartisan legislation that would create an infrastructure bank to leverage private investments to finance public works projects. Importantly, funding for this for bank would be drawn from repatriated corporate earnings and matched by investors, resulting in greater investments in projects at zero cost to taxpayers.

Expanding Regional Rail

To more efficiently move people and goods throughout the northeast, we must also continue to improve and expand our regional train rail network. Expanding commuter rail in our region through projects like the New Hampshire Capitol Corridor Project would bring significant economic benefits to Nashua and our entire state. I am committed to federal investments in regional rail infrastructure projects like this, which will help connect commuters with job opportunities, travelers with tourism destinations, and businesses with new customers.



Touring Burgess Biopower in Berlin

REDUCING THE DEFICIT IN A BALANCED WAY

Every day, I hear from Granite Staters about the priorities they want me to fight for and protect. From education and research to health care and infrastructure, there are critical investments that we must continue to make in order to grow our economy, create jobs, and strengthen the middle class. But to continue to make these essential investments, we must cut wasteful spending and reduce our deficit in a balanced, responsible way.



Discussing the federal budget at Southwestern Community Services in Keene

“A good first step in improving the budget outlook is to identify savings from eliminating wasteful and unnecessary programs and increasing the efficiency of other government programs as well as eliminating narrowly targeted tax breaks that add to the complexity of the tax code without producing meaningful economic benefit. Such provisions divert resources from more pressing national needs and increase public cynicism about the fairness of the federal budget” - Robert L. Bixby, Executive Director, The Concord Coalition

Targeting Waste Wherever It Exists

Inexcusably, in recent years the federal government has wasted millions of dollars maintaining empty bank accounts that serve no purpose. In 2012, the Government Accountability Office found that the government was spending more than \$170,000 per month to maintain more than 28,000 empty bank accounts at an annual cost of \$2 million. No New Hampshire family or business would knowingly tolerate that type of waste—and neither should the government.

To clean up the federal balance sheet in response to these reports, I introduced the ***Closing Long-Empty Accounts Now (CLEAN) Act***. This bipartisan legislation would crack down on federal agencies with long-empty bank accounts, identifying the unneeded ones and closing them within a week. While this common sense legislation is just one small measure that won't solve all of our fiscal challenges, I firmly believe the federal government shouldn't tolerate *any* waste—no matter how big or how small. I will continue to help identify and eliminate wasteful spending wherever it exists so that we can protect investments in the middle class.

Eliminating Duplicative and Inefficient Programs

To responsibly tackle the federal deficit and debt, Congress must also look at the big picture. That is why I am proud to cosponsor the ***Savings, Accountability, Value, and Efficiency (SAVE) Act***, legislation to implement expert waste-cutting recommendations made by the Government Accountability Office. This common sense bill could *save nearly \$200 billion* by cracking down on wasteful and duplicative spending, while protecting critical priorities that help create jobs, grow the economy, and strengthen the middle class.

This legislation includes a host of important reforms, including eliminating a duplicative catfish inspection program within the Department of Agriculture, consolidating data centers across federal agencies to allow for cost savings and increased efficiency, and improving best practices in federal agency contract competitions to cut expenses and reduce the number of noncompetitive contracts.

Streamlining Federal Agencies

Granite State businesses seeking federal assistance often face a complicated maze of offices and agencies that is both inefficient and difficult to navigate. While much of this assistance is valuable, I have heard from business owners who qualify for assistance but don't know where to go for help.

Granite State businesses looking to boost their exports, secure loans, or access new markets shouldn't have to navigate a confusing maze of agencies to access the services they need. By streamlining duplicative agencies and programs, we can save money while strengthening services that help Granite State businesses expand, create middle class jobs, and grow our economy.

That's why I introduced the ***Executive Agency Simplification and Efficiencies (EASE) Act***, which would help cut spending, consolidate duplicative agencies and redundant programs, and improve services for businesses.

INCREASING ECONOMIC SECURITY

I know that when the middle class succeeds, our entire country succeeds. When we strengthen economic security for the middle class, more New Hampshire families make the investments in education, homeownership, and goods and services that fuel our economy. An expansion of the middle class drives economic demand businesses depend on to succeed and grow, which in turn drives job creation and opportunity for working people. By increasing economic security for New Hampshire families, we can boost confidence among consumers, lenders, investors, and decision makers throughout our economy.

"We all know Social Security helps families, but we rarely stop to think how much it helps the larger economy. In fact, Social Security fuels almost \$1.4 trillion of economic activity nationally – and almost \$6.6 billion right here in New Hampshire... Overall, each dollar in Social Security benefits generates about \$2 in spending, as consumers spend the money and businesses then spend it again. In New Hampshire, this spending supports 44,000 jobs, a valuable contribution that gets little notice." - Dick Chevrefils, State President, AARP New Hampshire ¹



Meeting employers at a Career and Opportunities Fair in Nashua

Protecting Medicare and Social Security

For decades, Medicare and Social Security have been economic pillars in supporting our middle class. Granite State seniors have worked hard their entire lives as they raised their families, strengthened our country, and paid into these vital programs. Together, these programs have lifted millions of senior citizens out of poverty and provided financial security for generations of middle class families.

Last July, I hosted a telephone town hall to hear directly from New Hampshire seniors about the importance of these programs to their families. From across our state, older Granite Staters urged me to work to balance our budget—but not at the expense of those who are counting on Medicare and Social Security in their later years.

¹ <http://www.aarp.org/work/social-security/info-09-2013/social-security-impact-on-the-national-economy-AARP-ppi-econ-sec.html>

Our entire economy benefits when middle class workers can count on quality health coverage and dignity in retirement. While Congress must enact smart fiscal reforms to preserve the future of these programs, we must not cut the benefits on which so many seniors and vulnerable families rely. That is why I have urged the President to reject benefit cuts for these important programs since my first days in office.

Maintaining Unemployment Insurance

While our economy has made important progress since the recent economic collapse, too many people in New Hampshire and across the country are still struggling to find work. While New Hampshire's unemployment rate is lower than the national average, I have heard from some of the thousands of Granite Staters counting on long-term unemployment benefits.

Many of these workers are victims of macroeconomic trends and are out of work by no fault of their own. Nationwide, our economy still has 2 million fewer jobs than before the Great Recession began. Unfortunately, Congress has created uncertainty for the families of the long-term unemployed by putting the Emergency Unemployment Compensation Program in jeopardy. Failure to extend this vital program could cost as many as 310,000 jobs—a blow our economy just cannot afford. That is why I cosponsored the ***Emergency Unemployment Compensation Extension Act***, legislation to continue this program through 2014 and extend a vital economic lifeline to Granite Staters struggling to find work as our economy recovers.

PROTECTING THE NEW HAMPSHIRE ADVANTAGE

I've always believed that New Hampshire is the best state in the country to start a business and raise a family. The Granite State is blessed with incredible mountains, lakes, and forests, drawing visitors from every corner of our nation and all around the world. Our business climate is the envy of our neighbors, attracting the investments and entrepreneurial spirit needed to drive our economy forward. As your Representative, I am committed to protecting the traditions and resources that make the Granite State such a special place to live.

Supporting Tourism

New Hampshire gems like the White Mountain National Forest draw visitors from across the globe, helping make tourism the number two industry in our state. Each year, outdoor recreation alone generates \$4.2 billion for our economy. Despite the immense economic importance of tourism and travel, the federal government maintains an antiquated, 20th Century patchwork of laws that frustrate and deter potential visitors.

To facilitate tourism, I cosponsored the ***Jobs Originating through Launching Travel (JOLT) Act***, which would modernize and expand the Visa Waiver Program, a successful tool that allows hassle and visa-free travel to the United States for citizens of countries closely allied to the United States. This bipartisan legislation would cut down frustrating visa wait times through innovative reforms, such as secure videoconferencing for visa interviews. Together, these and other reforms would give an important boost to New Hampshire's tourism industry and support thousands of jobs across our state.



Discussing opposition to an online sales tax at Littleton Coin

Opposing the Internet Sales Tax

"It was great having the chance to meet with Congresswoman Kuster, and to tell her about my company. As a small business owner who sells over the internet, I was especially pleased to discuss our shared opposition to any new online sales taxes that would hurt my business and others like it in New Hampshire." - Travis Adams, Owner, Whaddy.com

Over the past year, some in Washington have pushed legislation that would require Granite State businesses to collect and remit taxes on online sales on behalf of over 9,600 tax jurisdictions across the country. This mandate would burden our economy and harm job creation in the Granite State, which

is why I am helping lead the fight against the so-called *Marketplace Fairness Act*, which would burden New Hampshire's small businesses.

Since taking office, I have heard from consumers and business leaders across New Hampshire opposed to a proposed sales tax on online transactions. In response, one of the first events I lead in Congress was a forum with online entrepreneurs to discuss the needs of small businesses in the 21st Century economy.

At this forum, I met a business owner from Hudson who shares my **opposition to the *Marketplace Fairness Act***. Since then, I toured his business to discuss how this mandate would impede his ability to hire and grow his business. I have also repeatedly highlighted the harm that this tax would do to small businesses, and have spoken out in Congress to urge its opposition.

Protecting Our Environment

Conservation is a hallmark of New Hampshire history and an important part of managing our working forests and farmlands. I believe we have a generational responsibility to protect our environment and ensure that our children and grandchildren are left with clean air and clean water. But I also believe that this important goal will help us strengthen our economy and create jobs right here in New Hampshire.

That is why I have helped introduce legislation to establish a national Renewable Electricity Standard to cut pollution, support jobs in innovative fields, and save consumers money. This legislation, the ***Renewable Electricity Standard Act***, would require utility companies to produce at least 25 percent of their power from renewable energy sources like wind, solar, and biomass by 2025, helping spur growth in our country's renewable energy sector.

New Hampshire is already a national leader on this issue with our own state renewable energy standard. This legislation would require the rest of the country to follow New Hampshire's responsible example. By adopting a national renewable energy standard, we can spur innovation, capital investments, and job growth in the renewable energy sector, all while conserving the forests and natural resources so important to our economy and way of life.

Conserving Wildlife Habitats

As a member of the Agriculture Committee, I was proud to sponsor an amendment to the Farm Bill to increase funding for the protection of wildlife habitats in forests and farmland. These habitats play a critical role in the health of our ecosystem, the conservation of our natural resources, and the success of our agriculture and recreation economies. After earning support from both parties, I was proud to see my amendment to preserve incentives for wildlife habitat conservation pass the full House of Representatives.

CONCLUSION

Dear Friend,

Thank you again for taking the time to review my *Middle Class Jobs and Opportunity Agenda*. Hearing from Granite Staters over the past year has been invaluable as I gathered feedback on how to best serve our community and support the New Hampshire economy. Please know that this this document is not the end of a conversation, but the beginning of one. I look forward to hearing from you on how we can keep working together to move New Hampshire and our nation forward in 2014. Contact information for my four offices is listed below. So again, please give me a call, stay in touch through social media, or send me a letter, email, or fax—I would love to hear from you.

Concord

18 North Main Street,
Fourth Floor
Concord, NH 03301
P: (603) 226-1002
F: (603) 226-1010

North Country

107 Glessner Road
Bethlehem, NH
03561
P: (603) 444-7700

Washington

137 Cannon House
Office Building
Washington, DC
20515
P: (202) 225-5206
F: (202) 225-2946

Nashua

70 East Pearl Street
Nashua, NH 03060
P: (603) 595-2006
F: (603) 595-2016



Meeting with members of the New Hampshire National Guard in Concord

Thank you again for everything you do to make New Hampshire such a special place to live.

Sincerely,



P.S.: Don't forget to stay in touch through my website and social media pages:

Website: <http://www.kuster.house.gov/>

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/CongresswomanAnnieKuster>

Twitter: <http://www.twitter.com/@RepAnnieKuster>

YouTube: <http://www.youtube.com/RepKuster>