



MESSAGE FROM THE NEW DEMOCRAT COALITION CHAIR

The 115th Congress has been unlike any other in recent political history. Over the past two years the Republican majority actively undermined America's health care system, exploded the deficit, failed to fix our broken immigration system and failed to prepare America's workforce for the changing nature of our economy.

Next Congress, New Democrats want to change the way things are done in Congress. Already we have inducted thirty new members-elect to start the next Congress. The diverse group of new Members will help the Coalition continue to advance bold ideas and innovative solutions and we hope to add additional Members in the future. [With this addition, we will be 91-members strong in the 116th Congress.](#)



We also worked on a vision for the future of Democratic leadership. In August 2017, I [delivered the Democratic Weekly Address](#) and highlighted the New Democrat Coalition's fight to give every American the opportunity to earn a good life:

"Today, we are distracted by a Tweeter-in-Chief who deepens our divisions, sows seeds of discord and fans the flames of violence. Our country needs and deserves leaders who will encourage us to be our better selves and who will champion the ideas that we know are good for our nation. These are the ideas that animate A Better Deal for families across America.

"Democrats are all about opportunity, growth, innovation and the good jobs that follow. We will not be distracted. We will not be deterred. Because we understand something that President Trump never will: that our world can be a far, far better place – and that together we can make it so."

We are excited to advance our shared priorities and move our country forward. I am excited by the opportunity we have as the New Democrat Coalition this Congress and for the opportunities that lie ahead in the Majority under Chair-Elect Rep. Derek Kilmer's leadership. He, [along with our full leadership team for next Congress](#), are dedicated to advancing the New Dem vision of keeping our economy competitive and our nation secure.

Thank you for your continued engagement with the New Democrat Coalition. Below are key highlights from the Coalition's work in the 115th Congress.

On Tax Reform

New Dems have long supported comprehensive tax reform that will promote economic growth, is targeted towards our middle class, and is fiscally responsible. We believe tax reform done right is important for middle class families, American businesses, and keeping our national economy competitive. Early on in 2017, New Dems met with Chairman Brady several times to discuss the potential for a truly bipartisan tax reform package. New Dem Members also [urged the Conference Committee](#) to abandon their partisan approach and instead pursue a true and serious bipartisan effort, like the one outlined in the [New Dem tax reform principles: The Plan for Real Tax Reform](#). Despite New Dem Members' willingness and openness to work across the aisle, Republicans charted a partisan path forward on tax reform, limiting markup, hearings, testimony, and debate.

On Health Care

From the beginning of this Congress, New Dems advocated for a legislative fix to stabilize health insurance markets and bring down the cost of healthcare for all Americans, and laid the foundation for bipartisan efforts in the Senate. Led by our Health Care Task Force, the Coalition released [Solutions Over Politics: Stabilizing & Improving the Individual Market](#), which offered proposals to create a permanent reinsurance program, reduce healthcare costs for low-income Americans, promote greater insurance coverage, create a greater number of affordable insurance options, and improve the marketplaces. Members [sent letters to Speaker Paul Ryan](#) calling on him to lead in a bipartisan manner to stabilize and improve the individual health insurance market while protecting the Affordable Care Act. We also [sent a letter to Senate HELP Committee](#) Chairman Lamar Alexander (R-Tenn.) and Ranking Member Patty Murray (D-Wash.) calling for a bipartisan path forward on legislative solutions to reduce health care costs. The New Dem Health Care Task Force then [introduced two bills](#) to cut health care costs and expand coverage to millions. More on how the [New Dem principles catalyzed the bipartisan momentum in The Hill](#).

On the Future of Work

Technology and globalization continue to change the economy and Americans' role in the workplace. Recognizing the need to update policy to reflect how the economy works today, New Dems started a conversation in 2017 with several experts on topics ranging from economic trends, to how work is changing in the 21st century economy, to skills training, and to portable benefits. New Dems [sent a letter to President Trump](#) calling for a robust commitment to apprenticeship programs and [urged Congress to invest in apprenticeship and training programs](#). We also [sent a letter to the Bureau of Labor Statistics \(BLS\)](#) and [introduced an amendment that unanimously passed the House](#) urging changes in BLS' data collection. The Future of Work Task Force released the [Economic Opportunity Agenda: A Future that Works](#), which lays out policy priorities and suggestions that will help make sure our workers are prepared for the economy of the future. Read our overview in this [TechCrunch op-ed](#), our first report: [Closing the Skills and Opportunity Gaps](#), and our second report: [Creating a 21st Century Social Contract](#). In these we outline the need for affordable, accessible lifelong learning focused on the skills of tomorrow, and how to modernize our safety net to adapt to the 21st Century worker.

On Infrastructure

New Dems are willing to work across the aisle and with the administration to revitalize our nation's infrastructure and provide the necessary foundation for robust growth and new jobs. For too long, Congress has relied on irresponsible, stop-gap measures that hinder productivity and economic growth, keep people in traffic rather than with their families, and make it more difficult to ship American products domestically and overseas. New Dems [sent a letter to President Trump](#) on the opportunity to move a big infrastructure package tied with tax reform. To help build momentum for a forward looking approach to infrastructure, New Dems [convened a panel of experts to discuss infrastructure policy](#), innovative funding and financing models, opportunities for public-private partnerships, and responsibly streamlining

regulations and the permitting process without compromising quality. The [New Dem 21st Century Infrastructure Task Force released](#) a set of [principles](#) and [priorities](#) to increase long-term federal investments in all types of infrastructure.

On Cybersecurity

Cyber threats have evolved alongside new innovations and technologies. Congress must do more to secure our nation, families and businesses. New Dems [sent a letter to the Office of Personnel Management \(OPM\)](#) urging improved cybersecurity hiring practices. The Coalition also [unveiled a robust cyber policy plan](#) in response to high-profile cyber incidents and the rise of Ransomware that have shown the very real consequences of cyber threats. Read more in [Safeguarding our economy and our future](#) in *The Hill*.

On the Budget

New Dems continued to urge for long-term fiscal responsibility and investment in priorities key to keeping our country competitive. Our nation's debt continues to grow at an unsustainable rate. New Democrats support a bipartisan, long-term approach to address the structural causes of our growing deficits and debt, including the impact of the Republican tax bill and other reforms. We outlined key policy priorities in [a letter to Speaker Ryan and Budget Committee Chair Diane Black](#) for the Fiscal Year 2018 budget resolution. New Dems laid out suggestions on how to significantly reform the budget and appropriations process in the House. [Read](#) and [watch](#) Himes' testimony before the Joint Select Committee on Budget and Appropriations Process Reform. New Dem Members also continued pushing for increased federal investment to find cures and treatments for diseases that impact families across the country. We helped [lead a letter to the Committee on Appropriations](#) requesting increased funding for the National Institutes of Health's (NIH) research into diseases that affect millions of Americans. [More on New Dems working with the Republican Tuesday Group on NIH funding in The Hill.](#)

On Trade

New Democrats support a pro-growth, pro-worker, forward looking trade agenda where the U.S. sets the rules for the global economy, rather than allows them to be set by others. We need to focus on winning the economy of the future, not the economy of 50 years ago. That means writing the rules of trade to elevate standards while leveling the playing field for American workers, businesses, and farmers. Over this Congress, New Dems held several internal meetings with former and current officials and experts on trade relations with North America and the Asia Pacific region. New Dems have been vocal about our concerns and priorities for American workers and businesses, issuing a statement after [President Trump's decision to withdraw from the Trans-Pacific Partnership \(TPP\)](#) and in [response to the announced agreement between the United States, Canada and Mexico to modernize the North American Free Trade Agreement](#). As the tariff [announcements](#) kept coming, [New Dems introduced bills to protect farmers, workers, and businesses](#) from the negative impacts of Trump's trade war. New Dems also [called for implementation of Congressional Review Act procedures](#) on trade measures by introducing the Trade Authority Protection (TAP) Act.

On Housing

Years after the housing crisis, our economy is not providing enough affordable housing options, leading to shortages across the nation. Constituted this Congress, the Housing Task Force is building on previous New Dem efforts on Government-Sponsored Enterprises (GSE) reform and broadening these efforts to address the full scope of housing policy at various levels of government. Over this Congress, the Task Force brought together thought leaders and industry experts to discuss the various factors that led to housing supply shortages and unaffordability. The [Task Force released](#) a preliminary findings report on [America's Housing Crisis: Missing Millions of Homes](#), which found that zoning and land-use regulations, demand shift to urban areas, construction funding availability, and the construction labor pipeline all contribute to dearth of available and affordable housing units in our country.

On Immigration

New Democrat Coalition Members were active in [calling attention to the travel ban](#) and the cruel family separation policy by visiting detention sites to speak with children removed from their parents. [Read more about the visits here.](#) In the House, Rep. Pete Aguilar [led the effort for a bipartisan solution](#) for Dreamers with the Hurd-Aguilar USA Act and [led the bipartisan "queen-of-the-hill" effort](#), which would have forced debate and a vote in the House on four measures to provide solutions for DACA recipients.

New Democrats will continue to push forward-looking legislation that will help grow our economy and increase opportunity for all. We look forward to continuing our work to advance these and other key priorities for the American people.

Sincerely yours,
Jim Himes

P.S. Please invite your friends and family to sign up for [this newsletter](#) to learn about what New Democrats are doing to lead America in a new direction. You can also get the latest updates and join the conversation on our [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Medium](#) accounts.