

New Democrat Coalition Taskforce on Innovation and Competitiveness Principles

As New Democrats, we have had a long commitment to our nation's economic and technological competitiveness. We support the Speaker and the President in their efforts to spur innovation. The New Democrat Coalition must continue to lead on these issues and offer guidance to the rest of our Caucus.

The Taskforce on Innovation and Competitiveness will develop principles and recommendations to help achieve these goals including:

- **Funding the Innovation Agenda** - Our research investment should be increased to fund fully the America COMPETES Act and to meet President Obama's goal of doubling our basic research investment. This investment should encourage high-risk research, support young scientists, and create new research incentives such as innovation prizes;
- **Creating an equitable tax code to spur innovation** - The U.S. has the second highest business tax rate in the world and has a complex tax code littered with loopholes. New Dems should help rewrite the code so that it is fair and equitable to all business, has fewer special interest loopholes, and has a lower overall rate to attract the investment and jobs we need. The code should also include a permanent research and development tax credit to encourage private sector research;
- **Achieving Universal Broadband Access** - America lags substantially behind other developed nations in broadband deployment and adoption. We must remedy this through Universal Service reform, provider and consumer incentives, and education;
- **Strengthen Small Innovative Businesses**-Small innovative companies need investment to develop the next generation of creative commercial products. As the SBIR program provides this investment, it should be reauthorized and expanded.
- **Educating and Expanding STEM Workforce**- Math and science education must be improved to expand our STEM workforce. We must eliminate financial obstacles by expanding scholarships and fellowships for students in those fields. Our immigration laws should be updated to allow highly skilled foreign students with degrees in STEM fields to stay here when they graduate to supplement the domestic workforce;
- **Reform the Patent System**- The PTO has a backlog of about 1 million patent applications, and it takes, on average, almost two to three years for a patent to get approved or rejected. We must increase resources at the Patent and Trademark Office to expand the number of highly qualified examiners to reduce patent review time and improve patent quality while spurring innovation.