New Democrat Coalition

One-Year Report

Winning the Future

March 2016

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In March 2015, the New Democrat Coalition released the American Prosperity Agenda. The following reports progress highlighting the various bills and initiatives New Dem Members have pursued that are in line with the Agenda's priorities. Unless specifically mentioned, the individual Member initiatives listed in the Report do not necessarily imply the endorsement of the New Democrat Coalition or the individual Members of the Coalition. This report was last updated on March 15, 2016.

Letter from Chairman Kind

Dear Reader –

There is no question that today's economy isn't the one I grew up in. And, it won't be the one my grandchildren grow up in either. In the past two decades, the Internet and a rapid boom in technology have forever changed the shape of our economy. Americans have seen the immense benefits these technological advances have had in their everyday lives. However, more and more Americans are concerned about what these changes may mean for their place in the economy.

In response, the New Democrat Coalition developed a plan to help hardworking Americans win in the changing global economy. In March 2015, we released the American Prosperity Agenda, which outlines how we can grow our economy, preserve the American Dream, and make government work better for the people. These principles represent ideas anyone – Democrat, Republican, or Independent – can support. The following is our one-year report on that Prosperity Agenda, outlining our list of policies to keep America the most competitive, creative, and innovative country in the world.

This report presents 200 different bills and initiatives that our Members have fought for, including ideas from every single Member of the New Dems. Many of these bills have become law or advanced through the legislative process; however, many have not. For the United States to grow its economy and remain competitive, we need to put aside partisanship and work toward compromise to advance bills like those in this report. From providing additional assistance to small businesses seeking to export to new markets, to investing in competitions to spur innovative scientific research, to making public schools more equitable, the bills in the report run the gamut of important policy priorities that demand action. Our report acts as a menu of commonsense policy options that will help solve some of most pressing problems facing the United States.

In many cases, the report highlights bills and projects that have become law – for instance, New Dem efforts to support the passage and implementation of *The Jump Start Our Business Start-Ups (JOBS) Act* to bolster new entrepreneurs trying to raise capital. It also includes innovative ideas to help government work more effectively, such as Yelp for Government, which allows federal agencies to set up Yelp pages to be more responsive to public feedback. Additionally, the report offers solutions for the future, such as *The Voting Rights Advancement Act*, which would help protect voting rights for everyone.

We know that we need to legislate for the economy of the future, not the economy of fifty years ago. This means identifying ways to make government more efficient; writing the rules of trade to elevate standards and level the playing field for our workers, businesses, and farmers; and investing in innovative policies that will help us maintain our status as a

global leader in areas like developing groundbreaking technology, moving toward sustainable energy, and increasing educational attainment. With the economy continuing to change, we need to increase investment in education and job training programs so everyone has the opportunity to succeed. Our report presents multiple options for addressing precisely these problems.

It won't happen overnight, but we need to take action today to stay competitive tomorrow. The policies laid out by the New Democrat Coalition will help shape and control the direction of globalization rather than allow globalization to shape us. Our economy isn't going to stop changing, and neither should our efforts to find the most innovative, effective solutions for adapting to those changes.

Sincerely,

Ron Kind
Chairman
New Democrat Coalition

Executive Summary

In March 2015, the New Democrat Coalition released the American Prosperity Agenda, a set of principles aimed at outlining how to keep America's engine revving, create high-paying jobs, and improve the skills of all Americans who seek them. The Agenda contains three broad priorities – grow the economy in every town and city, give everyone a shot at the American Dream, and make government work better for the middle class. Under these priorities, the Agenda contains 24 specific ways for Americans to realize the promise of our country.

This promise has always been the possibility of opportunity and a better life. For all Americans, this means achieving real and lasting prosperity and finding confidence that their children can as well. However, today's rapidly changing economy has made more and more Americans worry that this dream is at risk. The world isn't waiting for America's next move – it's racing to catch up and pass us. The policies in this report – both proposed and enacted – represent ways for America to stay competitive and remain prosperous in a 21st century global economy.

This report outlines the specific bills, letters, ideas, and other projects New Dem Members have worked to advance in the 114th Congress. The report contains 200 items, including items from each of our members. More than half of these items are bipartisan, several have become law in some form, and many have advanced through a committee or the House as a whole.

While we are encouraged that many of these items have become law, many more have not. Going forward, this report will act as a menu of policy options from a diverse group of Members. While pushing forward positive change is always difficult, this report illustrates the success of particular action in the past and serves as a constructive starting point for compromise in the future.

To view the hyperlinked items in this report, visit the New Democrat Coalition website at newdemocratcoalition-kind.house.gov.

NEW DEMS

I. Fix the Tax Code to Create American Jobs and Help American Businesses Compete

A modern tax code for the U.S. should foster business development and innovation, support middle class families, and create opportunities for Americans to prosper in a 21st century economy. The current tax code is a complicated collection of outdated provisions riddled with loopholes in serious need of comprehensive overhaul. In too many ways, existing tax laws stifle entrepreneurship and fuel uncertainty as many provisions rely on yearly extensions. New Dems support comprehensive tax reform recognizing the pressing need to update our tax laws and have proposed bills to fix portions of the tax code that will be vital to overall reform and international competitiveness. These measures include:

New Dem Support for Provisions of the 2015 Tax Package – At the end of 2015, the House passed a bipartisan tax package, through H.R. 2029, to make permanent and extend tax credits that drive economic growth and support working families. Provisions in the package – such as the Research and Development Tax Credit, increased small business expensing for property under section 179, delays in taxes on medical devices and certain health plans, and the New Market Tax Credit, among others – have the potential to make the U.S. more competitive and grow the economy. Similarly, extensions of credits for investing in wind and solar energy and parity for mass transit and parking benefits will help decrease pollution and modernize our economy. While many New Dems expressed concern over the effect of the package on the tax base and deficit leading many to vote no, the Coalition looks forward to using 2016 to find solutions for broader tax reform that will strengthen the economy, grow the tax base, and reduce the deficit. For the Coalition's press statement, see here.

Rep. Delaney's Infrastructure 2.0 Act – H.R. 625 – **Rep. Delaney's** bill expands upon the Partnership to Build America Act and would use repatriated revenue accumulated through international tax reform to increase investment in U.S. infrastructure and increase U.S. competitiveness. A "deemed repatriation" at a rate of 8.75 percent would produce $170

billion of revenue. If congress did not pass comprehensive reform, this legislation would also change our international tax system to eliminate the "lock-out effect" by ending deferred taxation of overseas income in exchange for a reduced rate in which companies pay more U.S. tax for income earned in low-tax jurisdictions and tax-havens, but less in countries that charge an Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) average tax rate. The $170 billion would provide 6 years of funding for the Highway Trust Fund as well as create a long-term financing entity to provide states with $750 billion of revolving financing for transportation, energy, water, communications, and education infrastructure projects. For more information, see here.

Rep. Foster's Autofill Act – H.R. 1750 – **Rep. Foster's** bill would require the Department of the Treasury to create a program to allow taxpayers to download income tax forms already populated with tax return information, such as wages and withholding, previously reported to Treasury. The bill would also create standards for data downloads to tax preparation software and provide on Treasury's website a secure function to download tax return forms compatible with automatic tax preparation software. By doing so, the bill would make it easier for average taxpayers to navigate the often-complex tax system and efficiently file tax returns. For more information, see here.

Chairman Kind's Partnership Audit Simplification Act – H.R. 2821 – After a Government Accountability Office (GAO) report was published in 2015 showing difficulties the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) has with auditing large partnerships, **Chairman Kind** worked across the aisle with Rep. Jim Renacci (R-OH) to introduce legislation that would modernize and streamline the process the IRS uses to perform these audits. Provisions from **Chairman Kind's** bill were ultimately included in the 2015 Omnibus and will save the government $9 billion.

Chairman Kind's Rebuilding American Manufacturing Act – H.R. 2970 – Chairman Kind's bill would create a new section of the tax code to promote American manufacturing by reducing the effective tax rate on domestic manufacturers to 20 percent. The bill places a high priority on supporting the stable jobs and sustainable wages the manufacturing sector offers by providing important benefits to firms that invest and hire domestically. The savings from the reduced tax rate would in turn enable businesses to increase investments in innovation and local hiring. For more information, see here.

Chairman Kind's Craft Beverage Modernization and Tax Reform Act – H.R. 2903 – **Chairman Kind's** bipartisan bill, introduced with Rep. Erik Paulsen (R-MN), combines and builds on a number of different proposals introduced in the 114th Congress. The bill would reform the current system of tax on beer brewers and importers by creating a simplified tax mechanism that supports large and small producers and importers. The new tax structure would be aimed at maintaining a fair, equitable, and comprehensive tax structure

for brewers and beer importers. Additionally, the bill would take steps to reduce red tape and streamline regulations. For more information, see here.

Rep. Larsen's Distillery Excise Tax Reform Act – H.R. 1172 – **Rep. Larsen's** bill would lower the federal tax rate for small distilleries, making them similar to existing rates for small breweries and wineries. Although they make much less than their competitors, small distilleries currently pay the same federal tax as large producers. Making this update would help level the playing for small distilleries that otherwise find it difficult to compete. For more information, see here.

Rep. Murphy's Work to Support the Angel Tax Credit – In the 113th Congress, New Dem **Rep. Patrick Murphy** and Rep. Steve Chabot (R-OH) introduced the bipartisan *Angel Tax Credit Act*, which would allow a new business-related tax credit for 25 percent of equity investments of $25,000 or more in high technology startups, particularly those funded by angel investors. The credit would be limited to investments in companies that employ fewer than 25 people, have gross revenues less than $1 million, and are less than seven years old at the date of the investment. Most recently, the tax credit was included in the tax package – H.R. 2029 – that passed the House and became law in December of 2015. For more information on the bill from the 113th Congress, see here.

Resident Commissioner Pierluisi's Child Tax Credit Equity for Puerto Rico Act – H.R. 3552 – **Resident Commissioner Pierluisi's** bill would update the Internal Revenue Code to allow citizens of Puerto Rico to claim the refundable portion of the Child Tax Credit on the same basis as U.S. taxpayers. By doing so, the bill would make the tax treatment of Puerto Ricans closer to that of other Americans. This bill would help working families in Puerto Rico put more money towards raising their children – the bill has the potential to benefit an additional 300,000 families in Puerto Rico. For more information, see here.

Resident Commissioner Pierluisi's Earned Income Tax Credit Equity for Puerto Act – H.R. 3553 – **Resident Commissioner Pierluisi's** bill would update the Internal Revenue Code to make citizens of Puerto Rico eligible for the federal Earned Income Tax Credit. By doing so, the bill would make the tax treatment of Puerto Ricans closer to that of other Americans. Puerto Rico's labor participation rate is well below the national average, and updating the tax code would help working Puerto Ricans and those seeking jobs. This bill could provide over $400 million a year in tax refunds to eligible households in Puerto Rico. For more information, see here.

II. Make it Easier for Anyone to Raise Capital and Become a Small Business Owner

Small businesses and startups are the engines that drive our economy and the entrepreneurs who start them help spur the growth that makes everyone more prosperous. More new businesses mean new ideas and more opportunities for consumers to purchase the goods and services they need. A recent study by the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation found that companies less than one year old have created on average 1.5 million jobs a year over the last three decades and companies less than five years old created all of the net new jobs. The ability of an entrepreneur with a good idea to raise capital and start a business is critical to expanding economic growth through sustaining and increasing the number of jobs new businesses create. To reduce regulatory obstacles and support new businesses and entrepreneurs, New Dems have supported efforts including:

New Dem Support for Making it Easier for Entrepreneurs to Raise Capital – To make it easier for entrepreneurs with good ideas to raise capital and start businesses, New Dem Members have been leading advocates in passing and implementing legislation like *The Jumpstart Our Business Startup (JOBS) Act*. Passed in April 2012, the *JOBS Act* makes it easier to create a startup and increases opportunities for entrepreneurs to raise capital and eventually go public with their companies. With **several Members on the Financial Services Committee**, New Dems have worked with Republicans to advance the original *JOBS Act* and since then have worked to provide appropriate oversight of implementation. This included urging the Securities & Exchange Commission (SEC) to swiftly implement various sections of the law. When fully implemented, the *JOBS Act* has the potential to bring new capital to small and emerging businesses, which in turn will lead to more innovation and job growth.

Start-Up Day Across America – On August 19, 2015, **Rep. Jared Polis** led New Dems in every corner of the country to visit start-ups in their districts to learn more about the difficulties of starting a small business and call attention to the need to reduce burdens on new business owners to drive economic growth. In total, more than five dozen members of Congress, as well as members of the Administration and the business community, worked to highlight the importance of startups in local economies across the country. By having members visit local startups, incubators, accelerators, and other new businesses, Startup Day shows that New Dems understand the incredible value that startups have brought to their local economies and to our nation's global competiveness. For more information, see here.

National Entrepreneurship Day & H. Res. 511 – Started in 2010, National Entrepreneurship Day seeks to recognize the efforts of entrepreneurs whose ideas spark

the next wave of innovation in our economy and support countless jobs across the country. The U.S. is a country that grew from the ground up through the hard work of new businesses owners and creative entrepreneurs – in 2013 alone, entrepreneurs and the businesses they created accounted for the creation of almost 2.3 million jobs. H. Res. 511, introduced by **Rep. Scott Peters** with support from Chairman Kind and other New Dems, would permanently designate the third Tuesday in every November as National Entrepreneurship Day to acknowledge the contributions of new and established entrepreneurs, as well as to help foster new educational and mentoring opportunities for young people and future entrepreneurs. For more information from **Rep. Peters**, see here.

New Dem Letter to SEC Chair Mary Jo White – In June of 2015, **Rep. Bill Foster** led members of the New Dem Financial Services Task Force to send a letter to Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) Chair Mary Jo White to highlight areas of equity market structure that would benefit from empirically-driven reforms to enhance transparency for investors and better facilitate capital formation for entrepreneurs. Specifically, the letter called for the SEC to update rules to improve transparency for order execution and increase disclosure for Alternative Trading Systems (ATS). In response in part to the New Dem letter, the SEC officially proposed new rules requiring ATSs to make more information publicly available, which has the potential to lower trading costs and increase market liquidity. See here for the Coalition's press statement and a copy of the letter.

Rep. Aguilar's Small Business Jobs Act – H.R. 3198 – **Rep. Aguilar's** bill would create a tax credit for small businesses equal to what they pay in payroll taxes for the first five new job openings their business generates. This tax credit would be targeted at small businesses expanding in areas with consistently high unemployment rates compared to the national average. For more information, see here.

Reps. Carney and Quigley's SEC Small Business Advocate Act – H.R. 3784 – **Rep. Carney** and **Rep. Quigley's** bipartisan bill would establish an Office of the Advocate for Small Business Capital Formation within the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC). The Advocate would be responsible for helping small businesses resolve problems with the SEC, analyzing the potential impact of proposed rules and regulations on small businesses, and reaching out to small businesses to understand issues related to capital formation. In addition, the bill would formalize the Advisory Committee on Small and Emerging Companies, which provides members of the small businesses community with a mechanism to communicate concerns to the SEC. This bill would not only improve the regulatory process for small business owners, but also do so for everyday investors and consumers. In February 2016, the bill passed the House by voice vote. For more information, see here.

Rep. Carson's Emerging Business Encouragement Act – H.R. 2234 – Rep. Carson's bill would create a new designation for Emerging Business Enterprises, similar to those for

women and minority owned businesses, at the Small Business Administration (SBA). To improve tracking and cater to the needs of the newest businesses, the bill seeks to recognize the differences between established small businesses with several hundred employees versus start-ups or new businesses with only a handful of employees. For more information, see here.

Rep. DelBene's Women's Small Business Ownership Act – H.R. 4027 – **Rep. DelBene's** bill would improve access to lending and increase business counseling and training services for women entrepreneurs, and give women-owned businesses the same level of access to federal contracts as other disadvantaged groups. The legislation adopts recommendations from the "21st Century Barriers to Women's Entrepreneurship" report, which showed significant barriers for women looking to start or grow their own business. To address those gaps, the legislation would increase funding for the Women's Business Center (WBC) program. It would also simplify the processes for program application and grants, reduce the paperwork burden on small-business owners, and increase transparency by requiring the creation of a peer review system in the accreditation program. For more information, see here.

Rep. Moulton's Microloan Modernization Act – H.R. 2670 – **Rep. Moulton's** bill, which passed the House on a voice vote, would increase loans available to small businesses, raise the cap on loan limits in high-demand areas, and provide greater flexibility for borrowers. According to a report by the House Small Business Committee, last year, the SBA Microloan Program supported nearly 16,000 jobs, which demonstrates the positive effect an expanded initiative could have for new businesses. Especially for aspiring entrepreneurs, self-financing and taking on debt can be overly burdensome, a key problem this bill would help address. For more information, see here.

Rep. Peters' Building Opportunities for Student Startups (BOSS) Act – H.R. 3983 – **Rep. Peters'** bill seeks to improve the innovation ecosystem for new businesses in the U.S. and encourage students to become entrepreneurs. Business and university incubators provide a tremendous opportunity to foster the growth of new businesses by providing key resources like shared office space, training, and connections to experts in the relevant field. To better understand the importance of incubators, the *BOSS Act* would direct the Secretary of Commerce to request a study on the role of incubators and accelerators, including those based at universities, in the commercialization of federally funded research and regional economic development. Specifically, the study would look at metrics to compare the development of start-ups to gauge these centers' outcomes and identify best practices of leading accelerators and incubators around the country. For more information, see here.

Rep. Loretta Sanchez's Startup Act – H.R. 962 – **Rep. Sanchez's** bipartisan bill, introduced with Rep. Robert Dold (R-IL) and New Dem **Reps. Don Beyer, Gerry Connolly,**

Patrick Murphy, and **Jared Polis,** would take key steps to support startups. The *Startup Act* would spur innovation and entrepreneurship by increasing access to credit and keeping the best and brightest graduates in the United States to create the companies and jobs of the future. It would establish new entrepreneurship and STEM visas for highly educated and skilled immigrants to remain in the United States. It would also make permanent the 100% exemption on capital gains taxes for investments in qualified small businesses held for at least five years and would create a limited R&D credit. For more information, see here.

Rep. Sinema's Helping Angels Lead Our Startups (HALOS) Act – H.R. 4498 – **Rep. Sinema's** bill would help angel investors, business experts, and entrepreneurs connect with startup companies that then grow to create jobs and fuel economic growth. The *HALOS Act* creates a clear, legal path for startups to participate in "demo days" by clarifying Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) regulations to ensure small businesses may participate in educational "demo days" without the burden of having to verify that attendees are accredited investors. These events provide invaluable opportunities for entrepreneurs to meet and exchange ideas with students, professors, business professionals, and potential future investors. In March of 2016, this bill was passed by the House Financial Services Committee with strong New Dem support. For more information, see here.

III. Invest in Roads, Rails, Bridges, Broadband Fiber and a Power Grid Worthy of the 21st Century

With too many roads and bridges crumbling around the country and a power grid waiting to enter the 21st century, we need robust investments in our transportation and energy infrastructure. For too long, Congress has relied on irresponsible, stop-gap measures that hinder economic growth and make it more difficult to ship American products domestically and overseas. In its 2013 report card, the American Society of Engineers gave U.S. infrastructure a nearly failing grade of D+. Though a five-year authorization was recently signed into law, we must remain committed to modernizing not just our roads and bridges but also our communication networks and power grid to help drive economic growth and make it easier for everyone to do business in the United States. To revitalize our outdated infrastructure, New Dems have worked on projects including:

New Dem Letter to Speaker Boehner Urging Movement on Infrastructure Bill – In July 2015 **Reps. Carney, Delaney, Esty, Kind, Maloney,** and **Perlmutter** led 30 total Members of the New Dems to send a letter to Speaker Boehner urging action on a long term surface transportation bill with a permanent funding solution for the Highway Trust Fund. The letter highlighted the need to invest in critical infrastructure projects and end the reliance on shortsighted, irresponsible funding mechanisms for roads and bridges in dire need of repair. The letter called for international tax reform to bring home U.S. tax dollars stranded overseas to address short-term needs coupled with a sustainable user fee to facilitate long-term stability. For more information, see here.

New Dem Support for the Bipartisan Transportation Package – In December 2015, New Dems unanimously supported the *Fixing Americas' Surface Transportation (FAST) Act*, bipartisan legislation to provide much-needed stability to America's infrastructure by authorizing surface transportation projects for five years, shoring up the Highway Trust Fund, and reauthorizing the Export-Import Bank. The bill gives local and state officials more certainty as they move forward on transportation and infrastructure projects vital to creating jobs and growing the economy. Despite this positive action, overall transportation funding remains inadequate and the need for continual, robust funding will only grow. Nonetheless, this effort was an important first step toward true long-term infrastructure funding that meets increasing demands for better roads, faster trains, and a modern transportation system. For the Coalition's press statement, see here.

Rep. Capps' Water Infrastructure Resiliency and Sustainability Act – H.R. 1278 – **Rep. Capps'** bill would create competitive funding assistance through the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to support local communities seeking to improve their water infrastructure, including oversight of local drinking water, wastewater management, and storm water utilities. At a time when many places face severe drought, the bill would help

increase the efficiency of water use and help address some of the effects of climate change. Additionally, the bill would help address water quality in cities like Flint, Michigan and other communities without reliable access to safe and clean drinking water. For more information, see here.

Rep. Delaney's Partnership to Build America Act – H.R. 413 – **Rep. Delaney's** bill would create the American Infrastructure Fund (AIF), funded through the sale of $50 billion worth of Infrastructure Bonds which would be purchased by businesses in exchange for repatriating corporate cash currently held overseas. The AIF would provide $750 billion of low-cost loans and guarantees to state or local governments to finance qualified infrastructure projects. In addition, the AIF would invest in equity securities for projects in partnership with states or local governments. For more information, see here.

Rep. Delaney's Infrastructure 2.0 Act – H.R. 625 – **Rep. Delaney's** bill expands upon the Partnership to Build America Act and would use repatriated revenue accumulated through international tax reform to increase investment in U.S. infrastructure and increase U.S. competitiveness. A "deemed repatriation" at a rate of 8.75 percent would produce $170 billion of revenue. If congress did not pass comprehensive reform, this legislation would also change our international tax system to eliminate the "lock-out effect" by ending deferred taxation of overseas income in exchange for a reduced rate in which companies pay more U.S. tax for income earned in low-tax jurisdictions and tax-havens, but less in countries that charge an Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) average tax rate. The $170 billion would provide 6 years of funding for the Highway Trust Fund as well as create a long-term financing entity to provide states with $750 billion of revolving financing for transportation, energy, water, communications, and education infrastructure projects. For more information, see here.

Rep. Larsen's TIGER CUBS Act – H.R. 278 – **Rep. Larsen's** bill would set aside 20 percent of special transportation infrastructure funding for mid-sized cities. Smaller cities often have a hard time competing with larger cities for federal transportation grants. This bill directs a portion of funds granted through the Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) program for cities with populations between 10,000 and 50,000. By targeting smaller cities, the bill would help improve regional economic development and ensure that all Americans have access to roads and bridges that meet the high standards of the 21st century. For more information, see here.

Rep. Sean Patrick Maloney's Public-Private Partnership Infrastructure Investment Act – H.R. 3465 – **Rep. Maloney's** bill would allow for faster and more efficient investment in crucial transportation and infrastructure projects around the country. The bill would modernize and improve the coordination between the government and private sector by creating an office within the Department of Transportation to assist agencies, states, and other grant recipients on implementing design-bid-build, design-build, and procurement

best practices; developing model contracts; and accessing federal loan and loan guarantee programs. By serving as a one-stop shop, this important resource will guarantee states can more effectively improve and invest in their critical infrastructure. This measure was included in the transportation package that passed the House in December 2015. For more information, see here.

Rep. O'Rourke's Emergency Port of Entry Personnel and Infrastructure Funding Act – H.R. 883 – **Rep. O'Rourke's** bill would authorize $6 billion over six years for the Secretary of Homeland Security to hire 5,000 new Customs and Border Patrol (CBP) officers to staff ports of entry, make improvements to current land ports of entry, and construct new ports of entry on the northern and southern borders. Ensuring the flow of legitimate trade and travel through our ports of entry is vital for the economic prosperity of American border cities and the country as a whole. By investing in updated technology and security infrastructure, this bill will help expedite the flow of goods that move across our borders every day. For more information, see here.

Rep. David Scott's Rural Access to Power Act – H.R. 4575 – Rep. Scott's bipartisan bill, introduced with Rep. Bruce Poliquin (R-ME), would authorize Federal Home Loan Banks (FHLBs) to make investments related to rural electricity infrastructure development. The bill would enable rural electric cooperatives to access capital and better serve local businesses and rural communities. By doing so, the bill would help make electricity access and service more reliable for rural residents. For more information, see here.

Rep. Torres' Regional Infrastructure Accelerator Act – H.R. 2485 – **Rep. Torres'** bill would connect finance and infrastructure professionals with local and state governments to better position infrastructure projects to attract private investment. Specifically, the bill would create a competitive grant program for Regional Infrastructure Accelerators (RIAs), defined as multi-jurisdictional or multi-state organizations that provide innovative technical assistance to local and state governments. Grants would then be used for developing regional infrastructure and leveraging private sources of financing for public infrastructure projects. For more information, see here.

IV. Aggressively Pursue Expanding Export Opportunities So We Can Make it Here and Sell it Everywhere

Exports represent a key opportunity for growing the U.S. economy – exports support millions of jobs in the United States, including an estimated 11.7 million jobs in 2014 alone. Moreover, export-related jobs on average pay 18 percent more than others. For the United States to remain a global leader, we need to continue producing top quality goods and services and capitalize on every opportunity to ship them overseas and create jobs at home. From supporting domestic manufacturers to taking action to reduce foreign tariffs, the U.S. has multiple opportunities to strengthen U.S. exports and maximize foreign investment. To take advantages of these opportunities, New Dems have taken action in many ways, including:

Reauthorizing the Export-Import Bank – In FY 2014 alone, the Export-Import Bank supported more than 164,000 jobs, helped finance $27.5 billion of exports, and generated a $675 million surplus. In October of 2015, New Dem **Rep. Denny Heck** led the effort to collect 218 signatures for a discharge petition, which every New Dem present signed, and ultimately led to a reauthorization for the vital export agency. New Dem leadership Members also sent letters to Speaker Boehner in September and October of 2015 calling for responsible governance through action to reauthorize the bank. The Bank was ultimately reauthorized through the *Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act*, legislation to reform the nation's crumbling infrastructure that New Dems unanimously supported on the House floor. See here for the Coalition's statement on House passage of legislation reauthorizing the Bank, and see here for a statement from **Rep. Heck**.

Trade Promotion Authority and Trade Adjustment Assistance – New Dem **Chairman Ron Kind** and other Coalition members were key leaders in supporting the President's trade agenda and organizing Democratic support to pass trade promotion authority to enable President Obama to complete the most progressive trade agreement in U.S. history. Every President since Franklin Roosevelt, except for President Nixon, has utilized trade promotion authority (TPA) to expand export opportunities for U.S. workers and businesses. The bill will help get job-supporting trade deals through Congress more efficiently, in addition to requiring more transparency and Congressional consultation than ever before and requiring the President to negotiate core labor, environmental, and human rights standards in trade deals. To maintain a balance between a robust trade strategy and the need to keep our workers competitive, New Dems also strongly supported and negotiated the passage of Trade Adjustment Assistance for workers displaced by trade with any country, not just those that have trade agreements with the United States. See here for **Chairman Kind's** statement on the passage of the trade package in June of 2015.

Letters to the Administration on the Trans-Pacific Partnership – Following the passage of TPA, more than 20 New Dems worked to lead and sign on to a series of letters to the Administration outlining key priorities for inclusion in the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP). These efforts included letters detailing the importance of trade enforcement; facilitating the free flow of data across borders; and upholding the labor, environmental, and intellectual property standards laid out in the May 10th, 2007 agreement.

Trade Facilitation and Trade Enforcement Act – H.R. 644 – To strengthen trade enforcement and improve customs laws, in December 2015 many New Dems supported a bipartisan bill that represented months of work by members of both parties in both chambers. Despite some problems with language related to discussing climate change and immigration in trade agreements, the bill took major steps to support small business through the State Trade and Export Promotion (STEP) program, combat countries attempting to circumvent trade penalties, and end the importation of goods made by child and forced labor. The bill was subsequently passed by the Senate and signed into law in February 2016. Our trade laws are only as good as the enforcement behind them, and this bill will significantly increase the tools to enforce trade laws. For **Chairman Kind's** statement on the bill becoming law, see here.

Rep. Aguilar's Displaced Jobs Relief Act – H.R. 4142 – **Rep. Aguilar's** bill would boost resources for the Trade Adjustment Assistance for Firms (TAA-F) program. The TAA-F program, facilitated by the U.S. Department of Commerce, offers technical assistance to businesses that—because of foreign competition—have seen significant job and sales losses. The bill increases funding authorization for the program per fiscal year from $16 million to $50 million, starting in 2016 and running through 2021. In 2009, authorization levels were set at $50 million until House Republicans cut funding levels to $16 million in Fiscal Year 2011. For more information, see here.

Rep. Carney's Made In America Act – H.R. 4409 – **Rep. Carney's** bill aims to create a simple and straightforward uniform labeling system for American-made products that helps both manufacturers and consumers. The bill directs the Federal Trade Commission to create a voluntary, easy-to-understand labeling standard that incorporates information about the origin of goods and the percentage of products designed in America, made by American workers, and made with American components. As companies make decisions to re-shore their production to U.S. factories, this legislation will help those companies sell more products, grow their businesses, and create jobs here at home. For more information, see here.

Rep. Connolly's Export Coordination Act – H.R. 2586 – **Rep. Connolly's** bipartisan bill, introduced with Rep. Steve Chabot (R-OH), would improve the coordination of federal export promotion resources to help more small businesses sell their products and services overseas. The bill would require the Department of Commerce's Trade Promotion

Coordinating Committee (TPCC) to clearly define each federal agency's role in the export process, establish a central listing of all trade events, and reduce overlap of current export resources. The bill would ensure federal trade promotion agencies reach out to state and local partners and make access to these resources as straightforward as possible. For more information, see here.

Rep. Costa's Country of Origin Labeling Amendments Act – H.R. 2393 – **Rep. Costa's** bipartisan bill, introduced with Rep. Michael Conaway (R-TX), repeals mandatory country of origin labeling (COOL) requirements for beef, pork, and chicken. After the World Trade Organization (WTO) ruled against the U.S. in a case brought by Canada and Mexico, the U.S. would have faced an economic cost of nearly $2 billion in retaliatory tariffs without this legislation. All Americans, not just those involved in agriculture, would feel economic damages if the potential tariffs resulting from the COOL suit had been imposed. In June of 2015, this bill passed the House on a strongly bipartisan vote of 300-131 and the text of the bill was ultimately included in the 2015 Omnibus package. For more information, see here.

Rep. Cuellar's Cross-Border Trade Enhancement Act – H.R. 875 – **Rep. Cuellar's** bill would help expand trade and improve efficiency at land ports of entry by allowing the Commissioner of Customs and Border Protection (CBP) to partner with public or private entities to bolster staffing and inspection along our borders. The bill would also establish a process requiring CBP and the General Services Administration (GSA) to evaluate proposals for alternative financing arrangement of infrastructure at land ports of entry, making it easier to plan for long-term developments in cross-border trade. Overall, the bill would grant current and potential participants in border security projects greater certainty and stability as compared to temporary, pilot program authorities. For more information, see here.

Rep. DelBene's Promoting Border Commerce Through Travel Act – H.R. 1394 – **Rep. DelBene's** bill seeks to promote cross-border commerce that benefits communities on the northern and southern borders of the U.S. Specifically, the bill would prohibit the Secretary of Homeland Security from either (1) establishing, collecting, or otherwise imposing a border crossing fee for pedestrians or passenger vehicles at land ports of entry along U.S. borders; or (2) conducting any study relating to imposing these fees. For more information, see here.

Chairman Kind's Bill to Help End Forced Labor – H.R. 1903 – While the United States has technically banned the importation of goods made by child, slave, and forced labor since 1930, the law has always included a loophole if demand existed for a good beyond the amount of the good readily available. **Chairman Kind's** bill would close the loophole that allows for the importation of goods made using slave, forced, or child labor. The text of the bill became law as part of the bipartisan *Trade Facilitation and Trade Enforcement Act.* For more information on the bill's introduction, see here.

Rep. Kuster's Small Business Growth Through Exports Act – H.R. 3912 – **Rep. Kuster's** bill would support small businesses seeking to increase the goods they export by reauthorizing through Fiscal Year 2019 the State Trade and Export Promotion (STEP) program, as well as increasing funding for the program. The successful Small Business Administration (SBA) STEP program works to ensure that small businesses, which often face barriers to exporting, can reach markets overseas. For more information on **Rep. Kuster's** work to strengthen small businesses, see here.

Rep. Larsen's State Trade and Export Promotion Utilization Program (STEP UP) for American Small Businesses Act – H.R. 2543 – **Rep. Larsen's** bill would reauthorize a competitive grant program for states to facilitate small business export promotion. Specifically, the bill would seek to increase the number of small businesses that export and raise the value of the goods that these businesses export. Foreign markets represent significant opportunities for small businesses, but navigating red tape and a multitude of complicated laws makes it difficult for many new businesses to access these markets. This bill would support small businesses and help them get their goods to reach consumers worldwide. For more information, see here.

Rep. Smith's Trade Adjustment Assistance Act – H.R. 1088 – **Rep. Smith's** bill would take multiple steps to support workers, including by extending the Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) program and the Reemployment Trade Adjustment Assistance (RTAA) program through 2020. Additionally, the bill would expand TAA to cover adversely affected workers in public agencies, increase job search and relocation allowances, and raise the maximum amount eligible workers can earn through wages. This bill, by investing in a flexible workforce, will help support workers and keep the U.S. competitive in an increasingly global economy. As part of the 2015 trade package, key portions of this bill reauthorizing and strengthening the TAA program became law.

V. Lead in the Next Great Discoveries: Reauthorize America COMPETES

For America to maintain its place as the international leader in scientific advancement and the discovery of groundbreaking technologies, we need to increase our investment in basic research in all fields of health and science. Agencies like the National Science Foundation (NSF) and National Institutes of Health (NIH) have supported research that leads the way in fighting disease and creating the latest, most advanced technology. New Dems strongly support legislation like the *America COMPETES Act*, a bipartisan bill originally passed in 2007 targeted at increasing American innovation and competitiveness through robust research and development. More recently, New Dems opposed a partisan version of the *COMPETES Act* in the 114th Congress, but continue to support a more robust version of the legislation that doesn't shortchange key research opportunities. To support related efforts in scientific advancement, New Dems have introduced legislation and taken actions to revamp research, including:

Amendment to COMPETES Reauthorization – When the House considered a partisan version of the *America COMPETES Act* in May of 2015, New Dem **Reps. Elizabeth Esty**, **Derek Kilmer**, and **Scott Peters** offered an amendment to increase funding for research by 3.5 percent across the board. That increase was a compromise number in itself, as it was substantially lower than the 10 percent annual increase recommended in the report *Rising Above the Gathering Storm* and lower than a New Dem-backed increase proposed under an amendment offered by other House Democrats. New Dems proposed the 3.5 percent increase to work toward a bipartisan middle ground that would still work toward providing research institutions with the backing they need. For the Coalition's press statement, see here.

New Dem Work to Pass 21st Century Cures Act – H.R. 6 – In July of 2015, New Dems unanimously supported the passage of the *21st Century Cures Act*, bipartisan legislation targeted at revamping health care research, streamlining life-saving drug approval, and investing in discovery of cutting edge treatments. In particular, the bill would bring key reforms to the NIH and boost its funding to help America develop the best and latest treatments. In recognition of the need for the U.S. to remain competitive in continually evolving fields of health and science research, the bill seeks to accelerate the speed at which the U.S. develops new treatments and delivers them to patients. For the Coalition's press statement, see here.

New Dem Report on Federal Research Funding Driving the Economy – The New Democrat Coalition will release a report entitled *Basic Research: Driving Growth and Opportunity* outlining how federal investments in basic research have driven economic growth and led to innovation across multiple different economic sectors. The report

focuses on several key innovations – from funding genetics research at the National Science Foundation (NSF) to supporting the development of the Internet at the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) – that started small and now make up key aspects of scientific progress, economic growth, and scientific innovation. The report highlights the need for robust levels of federal research funding, both for its own sake and its huge potential for economic advancement.

Rep. Beyer's Science Prize Competitions Act – H.R. 1162 – **Rep. Beyer's** bill, which passed the House by voice vote in May 2015, would clarify and update provisions of the 2010 COMPETES legislation to make it easier for federal agencies to expand the use of prizes for incentivizing innovative research and technologies. Specifically, the bill would clarify that agencies may use appropriated funds and accept outside funding sources for prizes and their associated fees, allow agencies to waive requirements that competition participants obtain liability insurance, and update existing terminology. For more information, see here.

Rep. Davis' Letters to Increase Funding for the National Institutes of Health – Over the course of 2015, **Rep. Davis** led the charge to increase funding for research and innovation at the National Institutes of Health (NIH). In a letter from March 2015, **Rep. Davis** and 169 of her colleagues highlighted how budget cuts have damaged medical progress and undermined support for scientists across the country. In response to this letter and other efforts, the requested NIH funding level of $32 billion was included in the bipartisan spending bill that passed in December 2015. In another letter from December 2015, **Rep. Davis** and other New Dems called for increasing NIH funding to $40.87 billion in the President's budget to adequately fund the agency and ensure its support keeps pace with inflation. See here for **Rep. Davis'** press statement in December 2015.

Rep. Foster's American Innovation Act – H.R. 1398 – **Rep. Foster's** bill aims to renew our commitment to innovation with steady growth in federal investment in basic research in science and technology. Specifically, the bill would increase funding at a rate of GDP-indexed inflation plus five percent for cutting-edge scientific research programs by lifting the budget caps for several research agencies such as the NASA Science Directorate and the National Science Foundation. Federal funding for research and development has been lagging in recent decades, and this bill would help increase American competitiveness and reduce our investment deficit. For more information, see here.

Rep. Foster's National Fab Lab Network Act – H.R. 1622 – **Rep. Foster's** bill would create a Federal Charter (similar to those enjoyed by the Boy Scouts of America and the Veterans of Foreign Wars) called the National Fab Lab Network and award that charter to the Fab Foundation. A fab lab, short for fabrication laboratory, is a set of digitally-controlled machine tools that allow a user to create almost anything, from initial concept and design to a finished product. Fab labs give inventors and entrepreneurs a way to

rapidly prototype an idea for a product; allow unemployed users to gain experience working with tools used in modern manufacturing; and provide children an outlet for creativity that helps teach science, engineering, and math skills. By awarding a charter to the Fab Foundation, the bill would help encourage the spread of fab labs and enable more people to take advantage of the innovative services fab labs offer. For more information, see here.

Rep. Kilmer's Space Resource Exploration and Utilization Act – H.R. 1508 – **Rep. Kilmer's** bipartisan bill, introduced with Rep. Bill Posey (R-FL), would direct the President to facilitate the commercial exploration and utilization of space resources, discourage unnecessary government barriers to space exploration, and clarify the rights of commercial entities to utilize natural resources found in outer space. To ensure U.S. law remains consistent with our existing international obligations, the bill would also place certain restrictions on commercial entities seeking resources in space. The bill was included in the *SPACE Act* when it passed the House on a bipartisan vote in May 2015 and subsequently became law in November 2015. For more information, see here.

Rep. Kilmer's Ocean Acidification Innovation Act – H.R. 1967 – **Rep. Kilmer's** bill seeks to give federal agencies a new approach to solving large national problems such as ocean acidification. It does so by allowing agencies to design and create public competitions that leverage existing research funds to help find innovative ways to manage, research, and monitor phenomena like ocean acidification and its consequences. For more information, see here.

Rep. Perlmutter's Department of Energy Laboratory Modernization and Technology Transfer Act – H.R. 1158 – **Rep. Perlmutter's** bipartisan bill, introduced with Rep. Randy Hultgren (R-IL), passed the House by voice vote in May of 2015. The bill would provide a number of tools to spur and accelerate the transfer of new technologies developed at the Department of Energy's (DOE) national laboratories to the private sector. Specifically, the bill would help promote innovation and economic growth by expanding the number of companies eligible to participate in technology transfers. The bill would also enable labs to use technology transfer funds for activities that identify and demonstrate potential commercial opportunities for their research and technologies. For more information, see here.

Rep. Polis' Demand Letter Transparency Act – H.R. 1896 – Rep. Polis' bill aims to assist small companies and end-users who lack the money, time, and resources to fight abusive demand letters they receive by putting additional information about claims at their fingertips. The bill would require senders of demand letters to include specific information about the patent allegedly being infringed and create a demand letter database at the Patent and Trademark Office (PTO) that would be publicly accessible and searchable. For more information, see here.

VI. Pass Immigration Reform and Become the Global Magnet for the World's Top Talent

With more than eleven million immigrants forced to live in the shadows and countless others waiting in line outside the United States, it is clear America needs bipartisan, comprehensive immigration reform. In the 113th Congress, New Dems led the effort to push forward a commonsense bill that would provide an earned pathway to citizenship and bring much-needed reform to the U.S. visa system. As long as Congress continues to delay action on comprehensive reform, the U.S. continues to lose out on top talent from around the world, our economy suffers as bright minds go elsewhere, and families remain separated. New Dems strongly support a comprehensive bill as the best path forward, but until Congress acts, New Dem Members have introduced legislation to improve specific aspects of our immigration system, including:

Comprehensive Immigration Reform in 113th Congress – H.R. 15 – As Republicans plunged America into a disastrous government shutdown in October 2013, New Dems led the efforts of House Democrats to address our broken immigration system. New Dems including **Rep. Joaquin Castro, Rep. Suzan DelBene, former Rep. Joe Garcia, and Rep. Jared Polis** led the introduction of a House version of the strongly bipartisan Senate-passed immigration bill, ultimately adding 200 Democrats and Republicans as cosponsors in the House. The bipartisan legislation would revamp our outdated visa system, provide an earned pathway to citizenship for those already in the U.S., and take steps to improve border security. Reforming the immigration system remains a pressing need with wide bipartisan support, and New Dems in the 114th Congress will continue pushing for commonsense, comprehensive reform. See here for the Coalition's release on the introduction of H.R. 15.

Rep. Bera's Doctors Helping Heroes Act – H.R. 1272 – **Rep. Bera's** bill would increase the number of visas allowed per state for foreign doctors practicing in underserved areas. Under current law, most international physicians who are trained in the U.S. on J-1 visas must return to their home countries for two years after their residency ends before they can apply for a new visa or a green card. But under the bill's provisions, these doctors can stay in the country without returning home if they agree to practice in an underserved area for three years. Allowing foreign doctors trained in the U.S. to stay and practice in underserved areas and at the Department of Veterans Affairs will help shorten wait times and address the workforce shortage. For more information, see here.

Rep. Cárdenas' New American Success Act – H.R. 3201 – **Rep. Cárdenas'** bill seeks to promote the civic, linguistic, and economic integration of immigrants and their young children into the United States. Specifically, the bill directs the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to award grants to local governments and community organizations to

facilitate the assistance of immigrants to the United States. Additionally, the bill would create a competitive grant program at DHS to support state and local efforts to improve economic, linguistic, and cultural integration of immigrants and their children.

Rep. Castro's Opportunity for Military Academies and Readiness Act – H.R. 2367 – **Rep. Castro's** bill seeks to provide support for undocumented immigrants who came to the U.S. as children through no fault of their own. Specifically, the bill would authorize Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) recipients who otherwise satisfy the requirements for admission to a military service academy, other than U.S. citizenship, to be appointed to and attend such academy and, upon graduation, to be appointed as a commissioned officer in the Armed Forces. For more information, see here.

Rep. Castro's Letter to Speaker Boehner on Funding for DHS – In 2015, **Rep. Castro** led a letter with more than 100 cosigners, many of them New Dems, calling on Speaker Boehner to act responsibly and refrain from using funding for the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) as a political tool. The letter notes the importance of supporting immigrant families through action on Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) and Deferred Action for Parents of Americans and Lawful Permanent Residents (DAPA). For more information, see here.

Rep. O'Rourke's American Families United Act – H.R. 2095 – **Rep. O'Rourke's** bill would establish case-by-case judicial discretion in instances in which an individual is a spouse, parent, or child of a U.S. citizen and would be eligible for adjustment of status if not for a previous minor immigration violation and when inadmissibility or removal would present a hardship to a U.S. citizen. By making this change, the bill would reduce the number of people who are unfairly punished by outdated immigration laws. Additionally, the bill would help preserve family unity by providing a better mechanism for evaluating deportation cases. For more information, see here.

Rep. O'Rourke's Fairness for Families Act – H.R. 3647 – **Rep. O'Rourke's** bill would correct an unintended consequence of the current visa process that fails to take into account a mentally or physically disabled adult child of United States citizens. This bill would allow these individuals to be considered immediate relatives of U.S. citizens for purposes of expediting visa applications, helping to keep together families who would otherwise be torn apart by unnecessarily blunt visa policies.

Reps. Peters and Castro Letter to President Obama on the Visa System – In March of 2015, **Rep. Peters** and **Rep. Castro** led a letter, with more than 25 New Dem signers, to President Obama encouraging the Administration to modernize and streamline the U.S. visa system. The letter noted the importance of immigration to building a strong economy, especially for industries reliant on progress in science and technology. In particular, the letter identified the significant backlog in requests for H1-B visas and called for

administrative action to recapture unused green cards to support American innovation and help entrepreneurs spur economic growth. For more information, see here.

Rep. Polis' American Entrepreneurship and Investment Act – H.R. 616 – Rep. Polis' bill would reauthorize and reform the EB-5 Investment Program. The legislation would enact common sense reforms to improve and modernize the EB-5 visa program for immigrants willing to invest in job-creating development projects in the United States. This legislation would further encourage American job creation and drive economic development by increasing direct investment opportunities in our communities. For more information, see here.

Rep. Polis' Investing in States to Achieve Tuition Equality for Dreamers (IN STATE) Act – H.R. 1507 – **Rep. Polis'** bill would provide incentives for states to adopt in-state tuition policies for students, regardless of immigration status. In many cases, students who were brought to the United States as children without documentation are unable to receive in-state tuition, making it even more difficult for them to acquire post-secondary education. This bill would help reform a harmful secondary effect of our broken immigration system and make it easier for certain students to contribute to the economy. For more information on the version of this bill introduced in the 113th Congress, see here.

Rep. Quigley's Jobs Originated through Launching Travel (JOLT) Act – H.R. 1401 – **Rep. Quigley's** bipartisan bill, introduced with Rep. Joe Heck (R-NV), is designed to encourage tourism, create jobs, reform outdated visa laws, and increase national security. Specifically, the *JOLT Act* would reform, strengthen, and expand the Visa Waiver Program (VWP), which the U.S. Travel Association credits with bringing $190 billion in economic output to the U.S. and supporting one million American jobs. To bolster national security, the bill would require the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security to enforce security requirements on VWP partner countries previously considered discretionary and would require all VWP participants to hold an electronic passport. In this challenging global climate, the *JOLT Act* would grow the economy while keeping Americans safe. For more information, see here.

Rep. Quigley's Stopping Trained in America Ph.D.s from Leaving the Economy (STAPLE) Act – H.R. 2181 – **Rep. Quigley's** bipartisan bill, introduced with Reps. Eric Paulsen (R-MN) and Jim Renacci (R-OH), would exempt foreign-born individuals who have earned an American Ph.D. in Science, Technology, Engineering, or Mathematics (STEM) from the limits on the number of employment-based green cards and H-1B visas awarded annually. Instead of sending high skilled immigrants back home to compete against us after earning advanced degrees in the U.S., the *STAPLE Act* would allow these high-skilled immigrants to stay in the U.S. This policy change would help create jobs, keep our country competitive, and continue to draw the best and brightest minds to America. For more information, see here.

VII. Harness America's Energy Boom While Acting as Responsible Stewards of Our Natural Resources

To best succeed as a source for energy and a vibrant economic center, America needs an all-of-the-above approach to managing our resources while also taking measures to safeguard the environment. By investing in new technologies to make alternative energy sources more effective, we strengthen our economy and reduce reliance on sources of foreign fuel. Similarly, taking a balanced approach to fuels such as natural gas, which emits no carbon when consumed, can drive economic growth and increase competitiveness. To best manage our natural resources and take advantage of the latest technology in energy production, New Dems have offered proposals including:

New Dem Support for Omnibus Deal to Strengthen Investing in New Energy Sources – To remain a globally competitive leader in energy, America needs to lead the way in supporting green energy and technological advances in the energy sector. The Omnibus took a number of steps to support American energy producers, including extending tax credits for renewable energy sources such as wind and solar, increasing funding to modernize the electricity grid and support energy efficiency, and lifting the ban on crude oil exports. Overall, the Omnibus and tax package will support the continued boom in the production of alternative energy sources and help increase America's energy independence in global energy markets. For the Coalition's statement on the Omnibus, see here.

Rep. Cárdenas' Low-Income Solar Act – H.R. 3041 – **Rep. Cárdenas'** bill would help reduce the upfront costs of installing solar panels for homeowners with suitable roofs and provide loans to developers to connect solar energy to renters and low-income families. Specifically, the bill would create a loan and grant program through the Department of Energy that would incentivize construction of community solar facilities, help connect individual families to solar power, and support initiatives to bring solar power to geographic areas that currently lack access to it. For more information, see here.

Rep. Connolly's Federal Leadership in Energy Efficient Transportation (FLEET) Act – H.R. 1963 – Rep. Connolly's bill, introduced with Rep. Jared Huffman (D-CA), would help modernize the U.S. Postal Service's inefficient and outdated vehicle fleet. The Postal Service owns and operates the world's largest civilian vehicle fleet with 192,000 mail delivery vehicles that are driven 4.3 million miles per day. Nearly 75 percent of those vehicles average just 10 miles per gallon (mpg), making the USPS a major consumer of fuel. Under this bill, all newly purchased vehicles would be required to have an average fuel economy of 34.1 mpg and reduce carbon emissions in line with industry standards set by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and the Environmental Protection Agency. The bill will increase cost savings by reducing expenditures on fuel and maintenance and

set benchmarks to make the USPS fleet a global leader in efficiency and innovation. For more information, see here.

Rep. Delaney's Tax Pollution, Not Profits Act – H.R. 2202 – **Rep. Delaney's** bill seeks to protect the environment by reducing greenhouse gas emissions through a predictable, market-driven approach that works for businesses and families. The bill would place a tax on greenhouse gas emission and increase it each subsequent year by 4 percent above inflation, using half the revenue to offset a decrease in the corporate tax rate and the other half to support American families and assist displaced workers in the coal industry. To ensure a level playing field for U.S. manufacturing and encourage world-wide adoption of similar policies, the tax will be applied to imports and rebated for U.S. exports. For more information, see here.

Rep. Engel's Open Fuel Act – H.R. 4047 – **Rep. Engel's** bill seeks to lessen America's dependence on foreign oil, provide cost competitive choices at the fuel pump for consumers, and enhance America's energy security. As an 'all-of-the-above' energy policy for the U.S. transportation sector, this bill would require 30 percent of new automobiles sold in the U.S. to be alternative fuel vehicles capable of operating on alternative fuels such as natural gas, electricity, bio-diesel, hydrogen, blends of methanol and ethanol, and other fuels derived using emerging technology. By supporting a diverse array of vehicle technologies, this bill would encourage development of domestic energy resources – including biomass, natural gas, coal, agricultural waste, hydrogen, and renewable electricity. For more information on the version of the bill released in the 113th Congress, see here.

Rep. Esty's Brownfields Redevelopment Tax Incentive Reauthorization Act – H.R. 2002 – **Rep. Esty's** bill would help spur the cleanup and redevelopment of brownfields to better protect the environment and create new businesses. Brownfields are areas previously used for industrial purposes, often contaminated with hazardous waste and other pollutants. This bill would reauthorize a tax incentive that allows taxpayers to fully deduct the costs of environmental cleanups on brownfields in the year the costs were incurred, rather than spreading them over a period of years.

Rep. Esty's Brownfields Reauthorization Act – H.R. 4463 – **Rep. Esty's** bill would help promote community revitalization and economic development by reauthorizing and improving the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Brownfields Program. Specifically, the bill would reauthorize the program's grant authority at $250 million annually through 2021 and provide additional tools to local governments and community partners to enhance the program's success. The bill would also expand eligibility for public-private partnerships to spur additional redevelopment. For more information, see here.

Rep. Peters' Super Pollutant Emissions Reduction (SUPER) Act – H.R. 508 – **Rep. Peters'** bill would identify certain especially harmful pollutants, such as methane and hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), as "super pollutants" and create a task force to recommend ways to reduce them. Almost half of human-caused global warming results from compounds – such as methane, HFCs, and black carbon – that are many times more potent than CO2. The *SUPER Act* would help identify important first steps to limit the damage these pollutants can cause. For more information, see here.

Rep. Peters' Department of Defense Energy Security Act – H.R. 3108 – **Rep. Peters'** bill would help the Department of Defense (DOD) increase energy security, boost combat effectiveness, accelerate the development of advanced military technologies, and save taxpayer dollars. Specifically, the bill would streamline efforts to improve energy efficiency across departments, improve infrastructure on military installations, allow bases to reinvest energy savings, and leverage private sector capital funding to improve the efficiency of mobile assets such as ships and deployable equipment. By increasing operational efficiency and putting a premium on green energy, the bill would help preserve the environment and allow DOD to reap long-term savings. For more information, see here.

Rep. Peters' Carbon Capture Research and Development Act – H.R. 3392 – **Rep. Peters'** bipartisan bill would help speed the development and deployment of new technologies that can convert captured carbon dioxide to fuels, chemicals, and other products. Specifically, the bill would add "conversion, use, and storage of carbon dioxide" to the Fossil Energy Office's list of research areas. Carbon capture technology, including algae, turns carbon emissions into products that can be used for food, fuel, and consumer products. For more information, see here.

Rep. Polis' Public Land Renewable Energy Development Act – H.R. 2663 – **Rep. Polis'** bipartisan bill, introduced with Rep. Paul Gosar (R-AZ), would further incentivize renewable energy development by streamlining the permitting process for wind, solar and geothermal development on public lands. The bill would also establish a revenue sharing mechanism that would direct some of the new revenues to state and local governments, as well as conservation efforts. For more information, see here.

VIII. Promote a Free and Open Internet as a Platform for Global Innovation

In just a few short decades, the Internet has gone from a little-known network at the Department of Defense (DOD) to a crucial pillar of the global economy. With billions of users around the world, the Internet contributes nearly $1 trillion to the U.S. economy every year. Maintaining the Internet as a catalyst for new technologies and innovation must be a key priority as Congress works to revise the outdated laws that govern the Internet and Internet-based technologies. To help promote the Internet as an open platform for innovation, New Dems have sponsored legislative efforts including:

Rep. DelBene's Wi Fi Innovation Act – H.R. 821 –**Rep. DelBene's** bill, introduced with Rep. Bob Latta (R-OH), seeks to improve access to and use of Wi Fi by directing the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to conduct tests within the 5 GHz spectrum band to determine if spectrum can be shared without interfering with current users. The bill also acknowledges ongoing efforts related to the development of critical safety applications in vehicles and other intelligent transportation initiatives, in addition to creating a study to examine the barriers to Wi-Fi deployment in low-income areas. For more information, see here.

Rep. Polis' You Own Devices Act – H.R. 862 – Rep. Polis' bipartisan bill, introduced with Rep. Blake Farenthold (R-TX), would clarify that when someone purchases a piece of technology, that person owns the entire thing and is free to sell, lease, modify, or give away the device. Some technology manufacturers have attempted to block customers from modifying or reselling devices on the grounds that the customers only bought the hardware, not the software inside it, which is copyrighted. This bill helps protect consumers by making it clear that a person who buys a piece of technology owns the entire device, including the essential software that makes it run. For more information, see here.

Rep. Polis' Unlocking Technology Act – H.R. 1587 – **Rep. Polis'** bipartisan bill, introduced with Reps. Zoe Lofgren (D-CA), Thomas Massie (R-KY), and Anna Eshoo (D-CA), would eliminate obstacles to competition and consumer choice by allowing consumers to permanently unlock their cell phones, tablets, and other electronic devices in order to switch carriers. Current law prohibits consumers from circumventing technological protection measures on devices they own, even if there is no actual copyright infringement involved. For more information, see here.

Rep. Polis' Breaking Down Barriers to Innovation Act – H.R. 1883 – **Rep. Polis'** bill would boost security research, journalism, and freedom of expression by reforming copyright laws. The bill expands the availability of exemptions to the *Digital Millennium Copyright Act's* anti-circumvention provisions, which are currently getting abused in a

variety of anti-competitive ways to inhibit advancements in areas like journalism, security research, and the repair of personal computing devices. For more information, see here.

Rep. Polis' SPEAK FREE Act – H.R. 2304 – **Rep. Polis'** bipartisan bill – introduced with Reps. Blake Farenthold (R-TX), Anna Eshoo (D-CA), Darrell Issa (R-CA), and Trent Franks (R-AZ) – would protect consumers from frivolous lawsuits against public participation (also known as "SLAPPs"). The bill creates a special judicial process for expeditiously dismissing SLAPPs if it is clear that a lawsuit cannot succeed on the merits. This would protect individuals from facing frivolous litigation designed to silence criticism when these individuals post honest reviews on sites like Yelp and TripAdvisor or write blog posts critical of public figures. For more information, see here.

IX. Protect Our Cyber Infrastructure and Data Online

As more and more commerce takes places online and everyone from small business owners to high school students uses the Internet to communicate and store data, establishing safety checks for cyber infrastructure has become imperative. We need a smart and balanced approach to security, privacy, and innovation that protects everyone from cyber-attacks and continues to foster the kind of creativity that made the Internet what it is today. To better manage data and more effectively strike this balance, New Dems have proposed bills including:

The Cybersecurity Act of 2015 – *The Cybersecurity Act of 2015* combines and reconciles three pieces of bipartisan, bicameral legislation that passed the House and Senate over the course of 2015. New Dems **Rep. Schiff** and **Rep. Himes**, who are respectively the Ranking Members of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence and the NSA and Cybersecurity Subcommittee, both championed the bill and its inclusion in the 2015 Omnibus spending package. The bill would improve cybersecurity by enabling and encouraging private companies to identify and voluntarily report cyber threats, while also providing clear liability protections. Additionally, by ensuring reported data would go through a single civilian portal at the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), the bill would provide multiple levels of privacy protection for civilian data. For more information, see here and here.

Rep. Carney's Data Security Act – H.R. 2205 – **Rep. Carney's** bipartisan bill, introduced with Rep. Randy Neugebauer (R-TX), would establish a single, consistent minimum standard for both data security and data breach notification. A single standard for security and breach notification provides better protection for consumers and provides greater clarity for businesses. *The Data Security Act* provides flexible and scalable standards, permitting each business to have a data security program that is technology neutral and process specific. Small businesses may tailor their data security requirements to fit with the size, nature, and scope of their business in order to avoid any unnecessary burdens and costs. For more information, see here.

Rep. Himes' Letter on Rules for International Cyber Conduct - **Rep. Himes**, ranking member of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence's NSA and Cybersecurity Subcommittee, led a bipartisan letter to Secretary of State John Kerry and National Security Advisor Susan Rice calling for the development of comprehensive rules for international cyber conduct, or an E-Neva Convention. The letter encouraged building on recent steps taken toward developing international norms at the United Nations and in a new agreement between China and the United States that seeks to curtail the commercial cyber espionage practices that threaten American businesses. An E-Neva Convention would also address serious national security concerns regarding attacks on critical infrastructure, the consequences of such attacks, and the proper potential responses. NSA and Cybersecurity

Subcommittee New Dems Rep. Quigley and Rep. Murphy joined **Rep. Himes** as cosigners of the letter. For more information and a copy of the letter, see here.

Rep. Kilmer's Defense Against Digital Theft Act – H.R. 3360 – **Rep. Kilmer's** bill seeks to support Americans affected by data breaches of personnel records maintained by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) by directing OPM to provide these individuals with complimentary identity protection coverage and insurance. The bill also requires OPM to take action to ensure affected individuals whose credit scores were impacted are not prevented from accessing classified information and would establish an OPM task force to issue recommendations on mitigating the damage of data breaches. The identity protection and insurance portions of the bill were included as a part of the Omnibus spending bill. For more information, see here.

Rep. Perlmutter's Data Breach Insurance Act – **Rep. Perlmutter** is working on legislation that would incentivize companies to purchase data breach or cyber liability insurance by providing a tax credit to policy holders who purchase a policy. However, companies would only be eligible to receive the tax credit if they adopt the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) Cybersecurity Framework. The data breach insurance marketplace has evolved and most traditional insurance policies such as commercial general liability (CGL) and professional indemnity policies do not cover cyber-attacks. This legislation would help ensure companies take steps to protect their critical infrastructure on the front-end as well as purchase protection on the back-end in case of a breach.

Rep. Polis' Email Privacy Act – H.R. 699 – **Rep. Polis'** bipartisan bill, co-led by Rep. Kevin Yoder (R-KS), seeks to modernize our nation's electronic privacy laws and bring protections against warrantless searches into harmony with the technological realities of the 21st century. The bill would update the *Electronic Communications Privacy Act of 1986* to eliminate a loophole that allows the government to search Americans' emails without a warrant if the emails are older than 180 days. This bill enjoys overwhelming support from technology companies and civil liberties advocates and has been cosponsored by a supermajority of House Members. For more information, see here.

Rep. Richmond's DHS Cybersecurity Strategy Act – H.R. 3510 – **Rep. Richmond's** bill, which passed the House by voice vote on October 6, 2015, directs the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to develop a cybersecurity strategy that would include operational goals and priorities. These priorities would cover existing programs and policies – including those of the National Cybersecurity and Communications Integration Center – as well as other efforts to continue research, development, and international partnerships. For more information, see here.

Rep. Schiff's Work to Improve the Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty Process – Rep. Schiff, who serves as Ranking Member on the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, has been a vocal advocate for streamlining the Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty (MLAT) process so that foreign partners can reliably request evidence held in the United States for use in criminal cases. MLATs are bilateral agreements with foreign partners to provide assistance in criminal legal matters such as requesting evidence of a crime that is held overseas. With the explosion in cloud computing and cross-border data flows, the MLAT process has become overly backlogged, leading some foreign governments to cite it as a driver for protectionist data localization policies. **Rep. Schiff** successfully championed an Appropriations request to provide greater resources to the Department of Justice's Office of International Affairs to streamline the MLAT process by adding additional resources and attorneys to ensure swift action on MLAT requests.

Rep. Torres' Strengthening Cybersecurity Information Sharing and Coordination in Our Ports Act – H.R. 3878 – **Rep. Torres'** bill, which passed the House by voice vote in December 2015, seeks to improve security at America's ports. Specifically, the bill would require the Coast Guard and National Protection and Programs Directorate (NPPD) to work with maritime security committees to improve cyber-risk information sharing mechanisms. Additionally, the bill would direct the captain of each port to convene working groups comprised of maritime security committee members to discuss port-specific cyber vulnerabilities. For more information, see here.

Rep. Wasserman Schultz's STOP Identity Theft Act – H.R. 1110 – **Rep. Wasserman Schultz's** bill would take steps to address the growing problem of identity theft. Far too often, identity theft places retirement savings at risk and makes it more difficult for hardworking individuals to claim the tax refunds they rightfully deserve. To help combat these problems, this bill would direct the Department of Justice to devote additional resources to identifying and prosecuting perpetrators of tax return identity theft, taking into account the need to concentrate on highly problematic areas and protect potentially vulnerable groups. The bill would also update existing law to address this problem and require the Attorney General to report to Congress on trends in identity theft. For information on this issue, see here.

X. Optimize Oversight to Keep our Financial Markets Stable and Productive

In the aftermath of the 2008 financial crisis, the need to bring additional oversight to our financial markets was clearer than ever. In response, Congress passed *The Dodd–Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act* to address some of the underlying problems that caused and worsened the crisis. To help ensure we never see the kind of economic hardship and uncertainty that overwhelmed everyday Americans during the 2008 crisis, New Dems support protecting the progress made by Dodd-Frank and working to make sure financial markets work as effectively as possible. In addition to the Dodd-Frank overhaul, New Dems recognize the need to limit the types of risky, irresponsible behaviors that led to the financial crisis while also enabling investors to stimulate economic growth and create jobs. Striking this balance and optimizing oversight helps to ensure we protect consumers while also supporting businesses that drive economic growth. To find this balance, New Dems support action including:

New Dem Letter to SEC Chair Mary Jo White – In June of 2015, **Rep. Bill Foster** led members of the New Dem Financial Services Task Force to send a letter to Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) Chair Mary Jo White to highlight areas of equity market structure that would benefit from empirically-driven reforms to enhance transparency for investors and better facilitate capital formation for entrepreneurs. Specifically, the letter called for the SEC to update rules to improve transparency for order execution and increase disclosure for Alternative Trading Systems (ATS). In response in part to the New Dem letter, the SEC officially proposed new rules requiring ATSs to make more information publicly available, which has the potential to lower trading costs and increase market liquidity. See here for the Coalition's press statement and a copy of the letter.

Rep. Delaney's Financial Stability Oversight Council Improvement Act – H.R. 1550 – **Rep. Delaney's** bipartisan bill, introduced with Rep. Dennis Ross (R-FL), seeks to increase transparency and accountability for the Financial Stability Oversight Council (FSOC). The bill would codify FSOC procedures for designating a non-bank financial institution a Systemically Important Financial Institution (SIFI), allow institutions to submit plans to modify their business structures prior to designation, and provide the institutions' primary regulators an option to address the risk before the designation. According to a recent Government Accountability Office (GAO) report, FSOC has multiple avenues for improving its SIFI designation process, which this bill would facilitate. For more information, see here.

Rep. Himes' Special Order on the Fifth Anniversary of Dodd-Frank – On July 23, 2015 **Rep. Jim Himes** led a special order discussing the fifth anniversary of the signing of *The Dodd–Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act*. In particular, **Rep. Himes** focused on the strong achievements of Dodd-Frank in helping the country rebound from

the financial crisis that began in 2008 and the continued work that has to be done to make the bill effective in response to changing economic conditions in coming years. Ensuring financial markets remain stable by preventing banks and other institutions from becoming too big to fail are key parts of protecting retirement and strengthening the economy for all Americans. In the wake of the financial crisis, Dodd-Frank has helped make markets more predictable and made it easier for more Americans to live their day-to-day lives with safety and security. For a video of the special order, see here.

Rep. Himes' Insider Trading Prohibition Act – H.R. 1625 – **Rep. Himes'** bill would take steps to crack down on insider trading and ensure that markets work more fairly. Specifically, the bill would make it unlawful for a person to trade on material, nonpublic information that was wrongfully obtained and make it illegal for a person who wrongfully obtains information to further communicate that information for insider trading. This bill would reduce uncertainty around insider trading liability, restore some public confidence in the market, and further protect retirement and other savings from everyday investors. For more information, see here.

Rep. Meeks' Securities and Exchange Commission Overpayment Credit Act – H.R. 1975 – **Rep. Meeks'** bill would require the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) to offset future fees due from a national securities exchange or national securities association if the relevant entity has overpaid past fees, including fees paid prior to the enactment of this bill. The bill would help ensure that securities exchanges pay only what they actually owe the SEC, increasing confidence that they will not face overly burdensome fees or other assessments. In May of 2015, the House Financial Services Committee unanimously passed the bill. For more information, see here.

Rep. Murphy's Systemic Risk Designation Improvement – H.R. 1309 – **Rep. Murphy's** bipartisan bill, introduced with Rep. Blaine Luetkemeyer (R-MO) and several New Dems, would make regulation of financial institutions based more directly on risk rather than asset size, which can be a more indirect, arbitrary way to measure risk. Specifically, the bill would require final determinations of the Financial Stability Oversight Council (FSOC) to be based upon specified factors, using an indicator-based measurement approach when determining designation as a Systemically Important Financial Institution (SIFI). This bill would help ensure that regulations are targeted at the riskiest institutions while allowing others to conduct business and drive economic growth. In November 2015, the bill passed out of committee on a bipartisan vote. For more information, see here.

Rep. Perlmutter's Marijuana Businesses Access to Banking Act – H.R. 2076 – **Rep. Perlmutter's** bill would remove current legal uncertainty by providing a "safe harbor" and additional civil protections for depository institutions that provide a "financial product or service" to marijuana-related legitimate business. For example, federal banking regulators would not be able to threaten or limit a bank's or a credit union's Deposit Insurance,

downgrade a loan, or force a depository institution to halt providing banking services to a covered business. Currently, marijuana businesses operating legitimately under state laws have largely been denied access to the banking system and other sources of credit because federal law could sanction or shut down these financial institutions. This bill would help solve that problem, and provide a safer, more stable way for businesses to operate. For more information, see here.

Rep. Perlmutter's Traditional Banking Regulatory Relief Act – H.R. 4647 – **Rep. Perlmutter's** bill would base the application of certain banking regulations on complexity and relevant activities, rather than arbitrary asset thresholds. This bill would support the multitude of community banks and similar institutions that do not engage in risky activities or pose a systemic threat to the economy but focus primarily on taking deposits and making loans to local customers. Specifically, eligible financial institutions would be required to hold no trading assets, refrain from holding most derivatives, have less than $3 billion in total notional derivatives exposures, and maintain a ratio of GAAP equity-to-assets of at least 10 percent (simple leverage ratio). Qualified banks would be eligible for relief from significant costs, including certain stress-testing requirements, Basel III Risk-Based Capital Standards, and submitting certain call report schedules. For more information, see here.

NEW DEMS

I. Keep the Dream of Homeownership Alive

In the wake of the 2007-2008 mortgage crisis, millions of Americans had to rebuild their lives after they lost their homes and saw the economy turned upside down. As we continue to rebuild in the wake of the worst economic downturn since the Great Depression, we need to make sure Americans can afford to buy a home and pay their mortgages. We also need to reform and strengthen the housing finance system to protect the taxpayer and preserve the ability of middle class families to buy homes. A strong housing market contributes to a stable economy and provides a safe way for everyday Americans to invest in the future. To refuel the dream of homeownership, New Dems have introduced legislation, including:

Reps. Delaney, Himes, and Carney's Partnership to Secure Homeownership Act – H.R. 1491 – **Reps. Delaney, Himes,** and **Carney's** bill would reform our housing finance system by creating an insurance program through Ginnie Mae, making available the full faith and credit guarantee of the federal government on qualifying single and multi-family mortgage backed securities. The program would combine the government's unique capacity to accommodate the size of the U.S. housing finance market with the private sector's superior ability to price and analyze risk. A government guarantee under this system would be explicit, but taxpayer money would be protected through adequate private sector capital and accurate pricing of government reinsurance. For more information, see here.

Rep. Maloney's First Time Homeowner Savings Plan Act – H.R. 4114 – **Rep. Sean Patrick Maloney's** bill would make it easier for young people and those buying a home for the first time to make an initial down payment. Since 1997, savers have been able to withdraw up to $10,000 from an IRA to go towards the down-payment on a first home. This bill would update that limit to allow for up to a $25,000 withdrawal (indexed to inflation) to go towards the purchase of a first home. Making this change will help renters save more money over the long term and allow more people to realize the dream of owning a home. For more information, see here.

Rep. Perlmutter's Tenant Income Verification Relief Act – H.R. 233 – **Rep. Perlmutter's** bill would allow tenants on a fixed income to have their incomes certified or

verified once every three years rather than annually. The legislation would help streamline and reduce the burdens placed on tenants for purposes of determining their eligibility for certain federal assistance housing programs, especially for seniors and others who consistently maintain a fixed income. Since the stock of public housing continues to face fiscal pressures, the legislation would also incentivize more privately-owned housing operators to accept vouchers, providing tenants more flexibility and choice. The bill itself passed the House in March 2015 and the text was included in the bipartisan transportation bill that became law in December 2015.

Rep. Peters' Housing Assistance Efficiency Act – H.R. 1047 – **Rep. Peters'** bill would streamline certain regulations at the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and reduce bureaucratic burdens when individuals and families need immediate help to stay in their homes. In particular, the bill would mandate HUD conduct reallocation of funds once a year instead of twice a year and include private nonprofits in the category of entities allowed to administer federal rental assistance. In December 2015, the text of this bill was included in the bipartisan transportation package that became law later that month. For more information on the bill, see here.

II. Protect a Strong and Stable Retirement for Every American

A key part of the American Dream is a simple promise: if you work hard and pay your taxes, you can look forward to a stable and dignified retirement. Everyone deserves the opportunity to put away a few dollars for retirement. For decades, American workers have relied on the simple promise of the American dream to do exactly that. The retirement savings gap for all Americans is a staggering $14 trillion, with one-in-five Americans who are approaching retirement age with no private retirement savings. The New Democrat Coalition believes it is important to balance important consumer protections for savers with appropriate access to information and advice. To ensure that current retirees and future generations get this same deal, New Dems have introduced legislation and supported efforts to make our retirement system more stable and more efficient, including:

Rep. Delaney's Social Security Commission Act – H.R. 1678 – **Rep. Delaney's** bill would create a bipartisan commission tasked with providing recommendations to Congress to keep Social Security solvent for the next 75 years. Under the bill, the Social Security Commission would include members appointed by both political parties. The bill also creates an expedited consideration procedure that would bring the Commission's recommendations to the floor for a simple up or down vote before Congress. For more information, see here.

Chairman Kind's SAVE Act – H.R. 4067 – Chairman Kind's bipartisan bill, introduced with Rep. David Reichert (R-WA), would support retirement savings for employees of small businesses by taking a number of steps to modernize the tax code in sensible ways. An alarming number of small business employees do not have nearly enough saved for retirement and many small businesses cannot afford to sponsor or oversee savings plans for their employees. The *SAVE Act* addresses both problems in multiple ways, in particular by creating automatic deferral IRAs that include catch-up provisions, allowing the creation of certain new deferral plans for small employers, and improving the information available to plan participants through income disclosures. For more information, see here.

Rep. Polis' Receiving Electronic Statements To Improve Retiree Earnings (RETIRE) Act - H.R. 2656 – **Rep. Polis'** bill would promote electronic delivery of retirement statements by automatically opting participants into this modern version of distribution. The legislation catches up with Americans' overwhelming shift towards digital communications while including a number of consumer protections. These protections include requiring an annual paper disclosure to all participants informing them of their right to receive paper documents if they choose to opt out of electronic communications. For more information, see here.

Supporting Access to Investment Advice - Members of the New Democrat Coalition believe it is important to update retirement investment rules to align incentives of advisors

with those of savers. Doing so has the potential to expand retirement security for millions of Americans. However, in doing so, New Dem Members believe that rules need to preserve the ability of savers to access advice for investments. The New Dems played a major role with *The Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act* in advocating for a regulatory approach that would reduce systemic risk and increase transparency and certainty in our markets. With respect to fiduciary standards, a key objective of the Dodd-Frank Act was to protect investors while reducing confusion. Over the last several years, New Dem Members have engaged with this issue through letters and meetings with the Administration to make sure the proposed fiduciary duty rule is updated to protect savers while preserving access to investment advice.

III. Keep Health Care Costs Down while Expanding Coverage

In the years since its passage, the *Affordable Care Act (ACA)* has brought low-cost, reliable health care coverage to millions of Americans and expanded access to regular care to even more people. Beyond the direct benefits of expanded coverage, a healthy workforce means a more productive workforce that more effectively builds our economy and solidifies America's place as the engine of the world economy. The ACA has also allowed more people to change jobs and more entrepreneurs to leave one company to start a new business without fear of losing health coverage. Going forward, we need to fine-tune our health care laws as we work to reduce waste and save taxpayer money while improving care and increasing access. New Dems have supported such efforts through several legislative proposals:

New Dem Letter to FDA on Prescription Drug Prices – In February 2016, New Dems **Rep. Ami Bera** and **Rep. Scott Peters** led a letter with nearly 30 New Dems calling on the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to take steps to keep the costs of generic prescription drugs affordable. The letter asks FDA to take commonsense steps to address loopholes that limit completion and allow some companies to charge exorbitant prices. Specifically, the letter encourages FDA to re-examine the Unapproved Drugs Initiative and take immediate action to address its ballooning backlog of applications for approval of generic drugs. With thousands of unprocessed applications for generic drugs and some consumers having difficulty affording medicines, FDA action on these items would help make many drugs more affordable. For a copy of the letter, see here.

New Dem Support for Reforming the Sustainable Growth Rate – In March 2015, New Dems, led in part by Healthcare Task Force Co-Chairs **Reps. Ami Bera** and **Kurt Schrader**, supported bipartisan work to bring stability and certainty to the outdated Sustainable Growth Rate (SGR) formula for Medicare reimbursements. The deal will help to guide Medicare away from the volume-based model of yesterday and toward the value-based, high-quality model of tomorrow. In addition to extending the Children's Health Insurance Program for two years, the deal will also improve reliability for seniors while stabilizing Medicare with better care and lower costs. For more information, see here.

New Dem Work to Pass 21st Century Cures Act – H.R. 6 – In July of 2015, New Dems unanimously supported the passage of *The 21st Century Cures Act*, bipartisan legislation targeted at revamping health care research, streamlining life-saving drug approval, and investing in discovery of cutting edge treatments. In particular, the bill would bring key reforms to the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and boost its funding to help America develop the best and latest treatments. In recognition of the need for the U.S. to remain competitive in continually evolving fields of health and science research, the bill seeks to accelerate the speed at which the U.S. develops new treatments and delivers them to patients. For more information, see here.

Rep. Bera's Middle Class Family Savings Act – **Rep. Bera** plans to re-introduce his bill, H.R. 5465 in the 113th Congress, in order to make two simple fixes to existing rules for Health Savings Accounts (HSAs) to better enable families to save for health expenses. Specifically, the bill would increase the amount individuals and families could deposit in tax-free health savings accounts to match the out-of-pocket limit for health expenses. Additionally, the bill would allow parents to use HSAs to pay for dependents younger than age 26. By making these two changes, the bill would make it easier for families to plan for health expenses and expand the number of people with access to reliable care.

Rep. Bera's Bill on Long-Term Savings Accounts – **Rep. Bera** plans to introduce legislation that will create savings accounts that could be used for investing in long-term health care. About 70% of people over 65 will need some sort of long-term care, but it is unlikely to be covered by Medicare or private insurance. Average annual costs for care range from a minimum of $18,000 for adult day care to more than $90,000 for full nursing home care. To help relieve financial worries faced by those in the "sandwich generation," who must care for children and aging parents, long-term care savings accounts would allow individuals and their friends and family members to contribute money that would be exempt from taxes when used for qualified long-term care or premiums.

Reps. Cárdenas and Sinema's PACE Act – H.R. 1624 – Reps. Cárdenas and Sinema's bipartisan bill – the *Protecting Affordable Coverage for Employees (PACE) Act* – was introduced with Rep. Brett Guthrie (R-KY) and became law on October 7, 2015. The bill allows states flexibility in determining the size of their small group markets for the purposes of the *Affordable Care Act*, enabling them to preserve markets limited to employers with 1 – 50 employees or to expand markets to include employers with up to 100 employees. By doing so, the bill will ensure small- and mid-sized employers do not see increased premiums or disruption in their insurance coverage for their workers. For more information, see here.

Rep. Carney's Medical Debt Relief Act – H.R. 2362 – **Rep. Carney's** bill would give individuals 180 days to resolve medical bills, allowing consumers more time to work with their health insurers and providers. Additionally, the legislation would remove paid or settled medical debt from credit reports. Individuals do not acquire this debt through purchasing health care services they cannot afford or other irresponsible actions; accordingly, we need to provide resources and tools for individuals who have suffered an unexpected illness or accident to rehabilitate their credit ratings and move on with their lives.

Rep. Courtney's Middle Class Health Benefits Tax Repeal Act – H.R. 2050 – **Rep. Courtney's** bill, which more than 35 New Dems have cosponsored, would permanently repeal the excise tax on employer-sponsored health care coverage for high-cost plans, also known as the Cadillac Tax. Studies of the tax have indicated it will have a disproportionate

and rapidly increasing impact on older workers, women, and workers in high-cost regions. The excise tax was established in a version of the *Affordable Care Act*, but its scheduled implementation was delayed five years by an effort led by Courtney in 2010. More recently, the 2015 Omnibus spending bill, which most New Dems supported, included a two-year delay of the tax. For more information, see here.

Rep. Davis' Medicare Diabetes Prevention Act – H.R. 2102 – **Rep. Davis'** bill would expand coverage of services designed to prevent diabetes for individuals eligible under criteria the Department of Health and Human Services would establish. With more than 25 million Americans suffering from diabetes and the annual cost of the disease in the billions of dollars, diabetes places a massive strain on our health care system. This bill would help prevent cases of diabetes from developing in the first place, which would both improve the quality of life for patients and reduce burdens in the health care system. For more information, see here.

Rep. DelBene's Small Business Tax Credit Accessibility Act – H.R. 762 – **Rep. DelBene's** bill would expand and simplify the Small Business Tax Credit created under the *Affordable Care Act (ACA)* so more small businesses could qualify for the credit and provide health insurance to their workers. Specifically, the bill would raise from 25 to 50 the number of people an eligible business could employ while qualifying for the small employer health care insurance tax credit, while taking other steps to streamline and expand the tax credit. For more information, see here.

Chairman Kind's Protect Medical Innovation Act – H.R. 160 – Chairman Kind's bipartisan bill, introduced with Rep. Erik Paulsen (R-MN), repeals the excise tax on medical device manufacturers and importers. By repealing the medical device tax, this bill and others seek to support job creation, incentivize innovation, and reduce the cost of health care. Over the course of the 114th Congress, many New Dems supported multiple efforts to repeal the medical device tax in legislation that included an offset. While H.R. 160 passed the House in June 2015, a two year delay of the tax became law as part of the tax extenders package passed at the end of 2015.

Rep. Moulton's Faster Care for Veterans Act – H.R. 4352 – **Rep. Moulton's** bill would make critical improvements to veteran health care by utilizing 21st century technology and connecting private sector innovation to the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). The bill would direct the VA to create a pilot program under which patients at VA clinics could use the Internet or their smart phones to self-schedule appointments. Self-scheduling technologies have been widely successful in the private sector by reducing the number of missed and cancelled appointments, saving our health system money, and creating a better experience for both patients and doctors. For more information, see here.

Rep. Sinema's Jobs and Premium Protection Act – H.R. 928 – **Rep. Sinema's** bipartisan bill, introduced with Rep. Charles Boustany (R-LA), would repeal a provision of the *Affordable Care Act* known as the Health Insurance Tax (HIT), which places an annual fee on health insurance providers based on net premium income. The Joint Committee on Taxation has estimated that the tax would cause health insurance premiums to be from 2.0 to 2.5 percent greater than they otherwise would be. The 2015 Omnibus spending bill, which most New Dems supported, included a one-year delay of the Health Insurance Tax. For more information, see here.

Rep. Vargas' Rare Disease Fund Act – H.R. 3731 – **Rep. Vargas'** bill would create a pilot program that allows the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to establish a privately owned and operated investment fund for rare disease therapeutics. The fund would invest in and develop early-stage (prior to Food and Drug Administration Stage 3) rare disease therapeutics and would have the authority to accept equity investments and issue debt, including a single tranche of government guaranteed debt. This structure, based on research from MIT, allows a large number of biomedical projects to be funded by a single entity and substantially diversifies the investment portfolio, thereby reducing risk. By using securitization to finance its activities, the fund also opens up a much larger pool of capital for investment to develop the next medical breakthroughs. For more information, see here.

IV. Invest in World-Class Schools and Higher Education Anyone Can Afford

A top-quality education is one of the most powerful tools for upward mobility. We need to strengthen our educational system at all levels to ensure that every student has access to a quality education. Student debt now makes up the largest share of privately held debt in the United States, totaling more than $1 trillion. For the U.S. to maintain its competitive edge internationally and remain the top destination for talent from other countries, we need to revamp our educational system through identifying what's working and changing what's not. New Dems have multiple proposals to do so, including:

Rep. Carney's FAIR Student Credit Act – H.R. 2363 – **Rep. Carney's** bill would allow defaulted private student loan borrowers to repair their credit history after making a series of payments. Through loan rehabilitation, lenders and borrowers enter into an agreement to begin making monthly payments. Once the borrower has successfully completed a series of on-time payments, the default is removed from the borrower's credit report. Unlike federal student loans, there is currently no opportunity to rehabilitate private student loans under the *Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA)*, which this bill seeks to address.

Rep. Courtney's Bank on Students Emergency Loan Refinancing Act – H.R. 1434 – **Rep. Courtney's** bill, cosponsored by more than 40 New Dems, would allow undergraduate borrowers repaying private or public student loans to refinance those loans to an interest rate of 3.86 percent. The bill would also enable graduate and parent borrowers to refinance at competitive rates, making it easier for borrowers to manage monthly payments and repay loans. By allowing borrowers to more quickly repay their loans, the bill would help make college more affordable and reduce delays on other major economic investments like buying a home or starting a new business. For more information, see here.

Rep. Davis' Eliminating the Hidden Student Loan Tax Act – H.R. 1285 – **Rep. Davis'** bill would remove all administrative fees, which can range from one to four percent, on federal student loans. By eliminating needless administrative fees, the bill would make government more effective and invest in families and students who apply for federal student loans. The Department of Education estimates eliminating this fee would save college students $2.5 billion in student loan debt. For more information, see here.

Rep. Delaney's Discharge Student Loans in Bankruptcy Act – H.R. 449 - **Rep. Delaney's** bill would make it possible to discharge student loans during bankruptcy proceedings, restoring the equal bankruptcy treatment of student loans with other forms of debt. Bankruptcy laws are designed to be fair both to lenders and to enable people declaring bankruptcy a chance to put their lives back in order with a chance to succeed. This bill would achieve this balance more effectively by ensuring that what has become one

of the largest sources of private debt is treated the same as other major sources of debt. For more information, see here.

Rep. DelBene's E-BOOK Act – H.R. 2089 – **Rep. DelBene's** bill seeks to meaningfully bring down costs for college students by increasing access to low-cost and free electronic course materials, expand the availability of e-readers and tablets for low-income students, and provide faculty with the tools to effectively incorporate digital learning into their instruction plans. Specifically, the bill would award competitive grants to institutions of higher education to create pilot programs to reduce the costs of attending college through expanded access to digital course material. For more information, see here.

Rep. Esty's STEM Education Act – H.R. 1020 – **Rep. Esty's** bipartisan bill, introduced with Rep. Lamar Smith (R-TX) and other members of the House Science, Space, and Technology Committee, would increase support for Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) fields. Specifically, the bill will improve resources for STEM teachers, expand the definition of STEM to include computer science, and make it easier for high-quality teachers to teach the next generation of students as Noyce Scholars. The bill overwhelmingly passed the House on a vote of 412-8 in February 2015 and became law in October of the same year.

Rep. Esty's Manufacturing Universities Act – H.R. 1441 – **Rep. Esty's** bipartisan bill seeks to increase the participation of engineering students in advanced manufacturing careers. Specifically, her bill would designate 25 universities across the country as "Manufacturing Universities" and provide funds to expand the manufacturing efforts at engineering schools. Additionally, the bill would require the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) to provide recommendations to small businesses on how to work with these Manufacturing Universities and other similar institutions. For more information, see here.

Rep. Esty's STEM Initiative – In May 2015, **Rep. Esty** established a Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) Initiative Working Group. The STEM Initiative seeks to bring together STEM leaders for a STEM Advisory Board to provide advice and information on legislation and issues relevant to the STEM community in Connecticut and nationwide. In particular, **Rep. Esty's** STEM Initiative focuses on addressing the dearth of women and minorities in STEM professions.

Rep. Graham's Middle STEP Act – H.R. 3346 – **Rep. Graham's** bill seeks to promote career and technical education in middle schools by creating a Department of Education pilot program. The pilot program would target middle school students and would award grants to local educational agencies and career and technical schools to develop a middle school exploration program. By focusing on engaging students at a younger age, the bill will help keep students enrolled in school and interested in long-term career options. For more information, see here.

Rep. Kilmer's Pathways to an Affordable Education Act – H.R. 4386– **Rep. Kilmer's** bill would improve the Federal Pell Grant Program by allowing it to provide funding assistance to students year-round. The will would also increase the lifetime limit for students to obtain the education they require and help expand early awareness to educate students on their options so they can plan their educational journey. For more information, see here.

Chairman Kind's Investing in 21st Century Schools Act – H.R. 3703 – **Chairman Kind's** bipartisan bill, introduced with Rep. Mike Kelly (R-PA), would amend the tax code to extend the Qualified Zone Activity Bonds (QZABs) program for schools. QZABs are 10-25 year loans on which the federal government pays interest and are designed to assist eligible schools with accessing money to make needed improvements. Loans may be used for facilities renovation, energy efficiency and renewable energy projects, equipment, curriculum development, or teacher training. Because the federal government provides the interest payment, the district is typically only responsible for repaying the value of the bond. For more information, see here.

Rep. Murphy's Reducing Barriers for Veterans Education Act – H.R. 456 – **Rep. Murphy's** bill would allow veterans to use part of their post-9/11 GI benefits to cover application fees for colleges or graduate schools. For many veterans, the cost of applying to colleges and graduate schools can limit options and in some cases prohibit an otherwise qualified applicant from attending a particular school. This bill would help veterans maximize the use of their education benefits by ensuring they have access to institutions of higher education in the first place. For more information, see here.

Rep. Murphy's Simple Income-Based Repayment Act – H.R. 4256 – **Rep. Murphy's** bill would help make Income-Based Repayment (IBR) of student loans more accessible by automatically enrolling all students with federal loans into the IBR program. The IBR program is frequently recognized as the best method to keep monthly payments affordable and on-time while also focusing debt forgiveness on those with the greatest need. The bill would also remove the burden on enrollees to self-report income and employment by enacting automatic payments through payroll deduction. For more information, see here.

Rep. Polis' Investing in Innovation for Education Act – H.R. 847 – **Rep. Polis'** bill would create a competitive grant program to support local educational agencies and other organizations that seek to foster innovation in public schools. These grants would be targeted at initiatives that improve teacher effectiveness, strengthen the use of data, provide high-standard instruction, facilitate school turn-arounds, or work to implement technology in new ways. The bill has been endorsed by more than 117 organizations from across the country and portions of it were included in the *Every Student Succeeds Act*, which updated No Child Left Behind.

Rep. Polis' Student Digital Privacy and Parental Rights Act – H.R. 2092 – **Rep. Polis'** bipartisan bill, introduced with Rep. Luke Messer (R-IN), would extend new, robust privacy protections to students by limiting how educational technology providers can use student data. In particular, the bill would prohibit providers from selling a student's personal information or using it for targeted advertising. The bill represents the culmination of nearly a year of conversations with teachers, parents, and administrators and was introduced with broad support from industry groups, privacy advocates, and the education community. For more information, see here.

Rep. Polis' Simplifying the Application for Student Aid Act – H.R. 3177 – **Rep. Polis'** bill seeks to help students plan for the cost of post-secondary education. Specifically the bill would allow students who are filling out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) application to use family income data from two years prior, rather than one year prior. This would help students apply for financial aid earlier so they can better prepare for the cost of education. For more information, see here.

Rep. Polis' Affordable College Textbook Act – H.R. 3721 – **Rep. Polis'** bill, introduced with Rep. Ruben Hinojosa (D-TX), would create a competitive grant program to support the creation and use of open college textbooks – textbooks that are available under an open license – allowing professors, students, researchers, and others to freely access the materials. By using open textbooks instead of traditional textbooks, average students can save thousands of dollars during their time in college. For more information, see here.

Rep. Polis' Earnings Contingent Education Loans (ExCEL) Act – H.R. 3752 – **Rep. Polis'** bill would streamline the complicated student loan process and peg graduates' repayments to an affordable percentage of income until their loans are repaid. Under the *ExCEL Act*, graduates would pay nothing during periods of unemployment and would pay more throughout their careers as their incomes rise. These changes would not require any additional paperwork since payments would be deducted automatically from graduates' paychecks. For more information, see here.

Rep. Polis' Making Education Affordable and Accessible Act – H.R. 4594 – **Rep. Polis'** bipartisan bill, introduced with Rep. Tom Reed (R-NY), would provide funding for colleges and universities to develop and expand dual enrollment programs at local high schools. The bill would expand existing federal grant opportunities to encompass both current and new dual enrollment programs and help train teachers for a broader role in the classroom. Funds could be applied in various ways to assist students and faculty with tuition, books, and transportation costs. For more information, see here.

V. Reward High Performing Teachers and Principals and Hold Our Schools Accountable for Results

To increase achievement in our education system and help students graduate prepared to start post-secondary education or find a job, our schools need proven models of education that put students first and hold schools accountable for results. Instead of writing a blank check, we need to provide states the resources and flexibility they need to design the next generation of high-quality assessments and implement innovative evaluations for schools, teachers, and administrators. To better allocate resources for education and boost achievement for all students, New Dems have focused on key policy initiatives including:

Updating No Child Left Behind – In 2015, New Dems called repeatedly for the House to take action on advancing a commonsense, bipartisan bill to reform the broken policies of No Child Left Behind and strengthen accountability in our schools while also ensuring students, teachers, and administrators have the resources they need to succeed. In July, New Dem leadership Members and Co-Chairs of the 21st Century Education, Immigration, and Workforce Task Force outlined priorities for reauthorizing the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)* in a letter to Senate leaders. In October, Coalition leaders sent a letter to then-Speaker Boehner identifying ESEA reauthorization as a key priority for the fall. In November, New Dem Vice Chairs **Rep. Jared Polis** and **Rep. Susan Davis** served on the conference committee to update the education bill, producing a final piece of legislation that passed the House on a bipartisan vote of 359-64. For the Coalition's press statement, see here.

Rep. Davis' School Principal Recruitment and Training Act – H.R. 930 – **Rep. Davis'** bill would create a principal recruitment and training grant program awarding renewable, matching grants to states, local educational agencies (LEAs), and other organizations to recruit, prepare, place, and support principals in eligible schools. In particular, the bill would focus on high-need schools, low-achieving schools, and schools with high achievement gaps to help ensure principals are well-trained to support students who are most in need of a quality education. The bill would also require the Department of Education to establish performance metrics to evaluate the success of the initiative and disseminate best practices. For more information, see here.

Rep. Davis' Recruiting and Retaining Effective School Leaders Act – H.R. 3925 – **Rep. Davis'** bill would incentivize effective school leaders to enter the profession and reduce principal turnover by granting loan forgiveness to principals and assistant principals at low-income schools. To ensure that principals stay at these schools, loans would be forgiven over seven years. Principals would be required to graduate from a high-quality principal preparation program, further ensuring that the most effective principals serve

underserved students, promoting accountability at education preparation programs, and supporting students who interact with better educators and leaders at their schools.

Rep. Kilmer's Teacher Loan Repayment Act – H.R. 3359 – **Rep. Kilmer's** bill would eliminate the current patchwork of loan assistance programs for teachers, including TEACH grants, and replace them with one streamlined federal program that provides all eligible teachers with a monthly loan payment, thereby providing a more effective incentive to teachers interested in helping those students most in need. Recently, the Government Accountability Office found in a report that existing programs that attempt to encourage educators to work in low-income schools are not effective, a problem this bill seek to correct. For more information, see here.

Rep. Polis' Great Teaching and Leading for Great Schools Act – H.R. 848 – **Rep. Polis'** bill encourages and supports professional learning strategies that involve the use of technology, peer networks, and protected release time for educators to engage in collaborative team-based learning multiple times per week. It also ensures that educator input is included in the development, implementation, and revision of professional learning plans and invests in the capacity of principals, assistant principals, and teacher-leaders to evaluate and provide professional learning opportunities for teachers. For more information, see here.

VI. Promote Skills Training that Helps Americans Succeed Anywhere, Any Time

In today's 21st century economy, Americans need an increasingly precise set of skills to enter the workforce ready to succeed. As technology changes the face of the global economy, we need to invest in high-quality skills training initiatives to ensure the U.S. remains internationally competitive in manufacturing and high-skilled jobs. In 2014, New Dems pushed for the passage of the *Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)* to bolster public-private partnerships and improve skills training for all workers. From strengthening the link between high schools and the workplace to investing more effectively in career and entrepreneurial training, New Dem Members have proposed smart, innovative policy ideas to strengthen workforce training and ensure everyone has an opportunity to thrive in the modern economy. Some of these policy ideas include:

New Dem Letter on WIOA Implementation – In June of 2015, more than 30 New Dems sent a letter to Secretary of Labor Tom Perez outlining key priorities for implementation of the *Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)*. The letter called for the Secretary to take steps to support robust career pathways, better align business and community needs, and streamline the use of data at the federal and state levels. In particular, the letter highlighted ways for the Department to study initiatives that support workers such as home health aides, implement projects that connect local businesses and educational institutions, and better collect data to improve efficiency. For more information, see here.

New Dem Letter on WIOA Training Outcomes – In March 2016, **Reps. Castro, Connolly, DelBene, Esty, Foster,** and **Polis** – who lead the New Dem Task Force on 21st Century Immigration, Education, and Workforce and the New Dem Task Force on Innovation and Entrepreneurship – sent a letter to the Department of Labor (DOL) on implementation of the *Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA).* Specifically, the letter calls for DOL to allow starting a small business to be considered a "successful outcome" for the purposes of entrepreneurship training under WIOA. It also outlines a few possible ways the Department could quantifiably measure the success of new businesses. For a copy of the letter, see here.

Rep. Aguilar's On-the-Job Tax Credit Act – H.R. 2431 – Rep. Aguilar's bill would help strengthen small businesses and incentivize them to hire new employees who are generally qualified but lack necessary skills training. The bill would pay for half the cost of training employees in an approved program, up to $5,000 per employee, and would be targeted at businesses with 500 or fewer employees. For more information, see here.

Rep. Carney's Education and Workforce Training Innovation Act – H.R. 1279 – Rep. Carney's bill would provide workers the tools they need to succeed by leveraging private sector resources, incentivizing education in technical fields, and implementing a results-

oriented approach to close the skills gap. America needs to commit to closing the skills gap and better prepare workers to compete in a 21st century economy. This bill seeks to ensure that government resources are used efficiently, students and workers are trained properly, and private companies are adequately staffed with highly skilled, hardworking Americans.

Rep. DelBene's Manufacturing Jobs for Veterans Act – H.R. 344 – Rep. DelBene's bill seeks to tackle barriers to employment for U.S. veterans by creating new resources for veterans to find jobs. Specifically, the bill would accelerate skills training in manufacturing career pathways, ensure veterans have the tools needed to translate their military skills to the civilian workforce, and encourage manufacturers to recruit, hire, and train our nation's returning heroes. For more information, see here.

Rep. Kuster's Workforce Development Investment Act – H.R. 3362 – Rep. Kuster's bill would help close the skills gap by providing incentives for businesses to team up with local educational institutions to ensure students gain the skills they need to compete and succeed in the 21st century economy. The bill would provide up to $10,000 in annual tax credits to employers that partner with community colleges or other institutions of higher education to improve workforce development for students by helping to develop curriculum, assisting with instruction in the classroom, and providing internships, apprenticeships, or other on-the-job education opportunities for students. For more information, see here. For more information, see here.

Rep. Larsen's Youth STEM Jobs Act – H.R. 2224 – Rep. Larsen's bill would help students access the ever-increasing number of jobs that require at least some background in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) fields, particularly in high-paying sectors like manufacturing. The bill would award grants to local educational agencies and create a pilot program to take students from junior year in high school through community college and into an apprenticeship to get on-the-job experience in high-demand fields. For more information, see here.

Rep. Richmond's Youth Summer Jobs Act – H.R. 2796 – **Rep. Richmond's** bill seeks to support young people as they build work experience and gain more skills between years of school. Specifically, the bill would direct the Department of Labor (DOL) to award grants to states to help areas with high concentrations of eligible young people complete summer employment programs that provide employment opportunities directly linked to academic and occupational learning. For more information, see here.

Rep. Richmond's JOBS Act – H.R. 3985 – Rep. Richmond's bill would make federal Pell grants available to students in job training programs, which would help ensure that students can afford to enroll in programs that prepare them for the workforce. The Pell grant program has helped hundreds of thousands of students gain access to traditional

colleges, and this bill would expand that access. For more information on this issue, see here.

Rep. Schrader's BUILD CTE Act – H.R. 2186 – Rep. Schrader's bill would direct the Secretary of Education to award competitive two-year grants to local educational agencies to support career and technical education exploration programs. These grants would provide middle and high school students with experiential learning opportunities connected to education and career pathways. The bill prioritizes applications from districts that show strong collaborative efforts with the local business and industry communities. For more information, see here.

Rep. Sewell's Workforce Development Tax Credit Act – H.R. 1781 – Rep. Sewell's bill would help close the skills gap and encourage job creation by incentivizing companies to increase paid apprenticeships and partner with community and four-year colleges with a federal tax credit for employers. An additional tax credit is offered to businesses that subsequently hire and retain these apprentices for at least one year post-apprenticeship. For more information, see here.

Rep. Torres' Job Opportunities Between our Shores (JOBS) Act – H.R. 2601 – Rep. Torres' bill would authorize the Secretary of Labor to initiate pilot projects with community colleges, state colleges, workforce investment boards, and manufacturers to facilitate education and training programs in the field of advanced manufacturing. The bill would help give students and workers the skills they need to succeed in the increasingly competitive field of advanced manufacturing, while also giving U.S. companies more of an edge for selling high-quality manufactured goods both domestically and abroad. For more information, see here.

VII. Expand Childcare Opportunities That Help Everyone Balance Work and Family

For too many Americans, the choice to have a family means giving up a job to care for children and forgoing opportunities for future employment, even when children move out or leave home for school. To help more Americans fully engage with the workforce and to ensure young children have the care they need, we need to expand access to childcare and high-quality early childhood education. Doing so would support working families and help parents maintain a sensible life balance. Toward this end, New Dems have proposed bills including:

Rep. Castro's Pre-K for USA Act – H.R. 4042 – Rep. Castro's bill would create a competitive grant program for states and local educational agencies to provide more effective pre-kindergarten classes. By beginning this initiative, the bill would increase access to quality pre-K programs and make comprehensive, thoughtful changes that positively impact states, local educational agencies, and local government entities. As localities receive grants for pre-K classes, successful initiatives would serve as models for the creation of future programs. For more information, see here.

Rep. Delaney's Early Learning Act – H.R. 3542 – Rep. Delaney's bill would provide funding for free, high-quality, universal pre-K to all four-year-olds across the country. The bill would establish an Early Education Trust Fund to distribute enrollment-based grants to state departments of education to establish or expand pre-K programs, while requiring participating states to certify they have an accreditation process in place and to maintain current levels of pre-K funding. For more information, see here.

Rep. Himes' Supporting Early Learning Act – H.R. 374 – Rep. Himes' bill, introduced with New Dem Rep. Gerry Connolly, would create an early learning challenge fund that would fund two competitive grant programs at the Department of Education. Funds from both grant programs would be used to implement or improve early learning systems, help these programs meet and sustain higher levels of quality standards, and move more low-income children into higher quality programs. The bill would help develop a permanent, national, competitive approach to investing in early education and ensure the Administration's strategy continues for years to come. For more information, see here.

Rep. Himes' Total Learning Act – H.R. 375 – Rep. Himes' bill would focus on our highest need communities to improve early learning. The bill would create a competitive grant program for eligible community partnerships to implement early learning programs for children from birth to age 9. The grants would encourage initiatives that focus on multi-modal teaching, intensive parental involvement, and included social services. The model for this program was developed in part from lessons learned through expanding early

educational services in Bridgeport, CT, which has one of the highest achievement gaps in the country. For more information, see here.

Rep. Sinema's Child and Dependent Care FSA Enhancement Act – H.R. 1720 – **Rep. Sinema's** bill would help families afford the increasing costs of child and dependent care by making changes to dependent care flexible spending accounts (FSAs). These accounts are employer-provided programs that allow families to exclude dependent care expenses from their taxable income. Specifically, the bill increases from $5,000 to $7,500 the amount of pre-tax dollars that families can put into dependent care FSAs and indexes the increased amount to inflation after 2016. For more information, see here.

NEW DEMS

I. End Crisis-by-Crisis Governing and Pursue Long-Term, Pro-Growth Fiscal Reform that Prioritizes Investments in our Future

When lawmakers treat compromise as a dirty word and delay action on legislation to keep the government functioning, the economy suffers and millions of everyday Americans are forced to live in uncertainty. Risking a shutdown of the entire government or default on the debt of the United States threatens basic economic stability. New Dems support commonsense approaches to governing that help ensure Congress fulfills its most basic obligations and sets responsible levels of federal spending. To help achieve these goals, New Dems have supported several efforts, including:

New Dem Leadership Letter to Speaker Boehner – In September 2015, leaders of the Coalition sent a letter to then-Speaker Boehner calling for him to address several legislative issues necessary to maintaining certainty in the day-to-day operations of the government, including keeping the government open and raising the debt ceiling to prevent default on the country's fiscal obligations. The 2013 government shutdown took $24 billion out of the U.S. economy, and in 2015 New Dems called attention to the need to avoid wasting time on an unnecessary shutdown fight and instead build consensus on common priorities. For the Coalition's press statement on the letter, see here.

Rep. Ashford's Balanced Budget Amendment – H.J. Res. 83 – **Rep. Ashford's** measure would amend the U.S. Constitution to require the federal government to balance the budget. The proposal would prohibit annual spending from exceeding the revenue collected from the previous year. The amendment would provide exemptions in specific circumstances, such as in the event of war or economic decline. It would also provide protections for Social Security and Medicare benefits. For more information, see here.

Rep. Carney's Budget Integrity Act – H.R. 2498 – **Rep. Carney's** bill would simplify the budgeting process to provide more predictability and stability to what has become an overly partisan process. Specifically, the bill would require the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) to prepare an analysis on 30-year costs of significant legislative items and require both CBO and the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to prepare annual reports on

long-term spending and revenues. Additionally, the bill would tie budget resolutions to automatic, corresponding increases in the debt limit while also codifying procedural objections to bills that would significantly increase long-term deficits. For more information, see here.

Rep. Cooper's No Budget, No Pay Act – H.R. 187 – **Rep. Cooper's** bill would require Congress to pass a budget and all its appropriations bills by October 1st of every year or forgo its pay with no option for retroactive pay. This bill would help hold Congress accountable to its basic responsibilities and make government work like it was designed to. In 2013, Congress overwhelmingly passed a temporary *No Budget, No Pay Act*; that year, both the House and Senate passed individual budgets for the first time in four years. This bill would expand the successful efforts of the 2013 bill that became law. For more information, see here.

Rep. Cooper's Stop Pay for Members Act – H.R. 3757 – **Rep. Cooper's** bill would stop pay for Members of Congress if the U.S. defaulted on its national debt. A default on U.S. debt could be even worse than a government shutdown and would irrevocably damage the credit of the United States. This bill would provide an additional incentive for Congress to avoid a disastrous default and the damage it would cause the economy. For more information, see here.

Reps. Delaney and Peters' Honest Dynamic Scoring Resolution – H. Res. 389 – **Reps. Delaney** and **Peters'** resolution seeks to improve responsible federal budgeting and ensure Congress treats changes in tax revenues and spending on equal footing when evaluating budgetary effects. This measure would amend House rules to increase the threshold of bills that trigger dynamic scoring from 0.25 percent of GDP to one percent of the previous year's discretionary spending and calls for dynamic scoring of spending in an appropriation bill for which the authorizing legislation was dynamically scored. This ensures that legislation that changes spending on infrastructure, education, and R&D will more accurately reflect the long-term impact on the federal budget. For more information, see here.

Rep. Kirkpatrick's Expedited Consideration of Cuts, Consolidations, and Savings Act – H.R. 3253 – **Rep. Kirkpatrick's** bill would help facilitate Congressional work to efficiently cut waste out of government and save taxpayer money. This bill would create expedited procedures for congressional consideration of legislation to carry out recommendations included in the Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) annual Cuts, Consolidations, and Savings report. This OMB report lists proposals in the President's budget that would save money or consolidate duplicative mandatory and discretionary spending programs.

Rep. Peters' Congressional Work Week Resolution – H. Res. 184 – **Rep. Peters'** measure would amend the rules of the House of Representatives to require the House to be

in session and take votes five days a week for 39 weeks of the year. This change would increase the time members of Congress are able to spend together working on substantive legislation and would help foster bipartisan working relationships. Additionally, it would make it easier for Congress to work on meeting long-term deadlines by spending more time focused on governing. See here for more information and here for a short summary.

Rep. Peters' Protect America's Credit Act – H.R. 3774 – **Rep. Peters'** bill would take steps to preserve the credit rating of the United States by reforming the debt limit. Specifically, the bill would index the debt limit to inflation at the beginning of the year so that regular economic growth could not cause the U.S. to exceed the debt limit. Additionally, the bill would redefine debt subject to the statutory limit to exclude intra-governmental debt, such as debt held by government trust funds, which most economists consider a less meaningful measure of the impact of debt on the economy. For more information, see here.

Rep. Peters' Pay Down the Debt Act – H.R. 3775 – When debt as a percentage of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is increasing, **Rep. Peters'** bill would require all Presidential budgets and budget resolutions to propose a stable or declining debt, in an expedited and enforceable process. Importantly, this requirement would be suspended in bad economic times, such as when nominal GDP grew by less than one percent in the prior year or if Congress determined by resolution that stabilization would lead to an economic downturn. For more information, see here

Rep. Schrader's Biennial Budgeting and Enhanced Oversight Act – H.R. 1610 – **Rep. Schrader's** bipartisan bill, introduced with Rep. Reid Ribble (R-WI), would change the process for the President's budget submission, congressional budget resolutions, appropriations bills, and government strategic and performance plans from the current annual process to a biennial process. In doing so, the bill would help reduce partisan gridlock that occurs every year and provide more time for long-term negotiations over budget and spending priorities. Currently, more than 30 New Dems have signed on as cosponsors of the bill. For more information, see here.

II. Prioritize National Security by Giving Government Tools to Spend Less and Buy Smarter on the Goods and Services it Needs

In addition to economic security, middle-class Americans need policies that make government more efficient while keeping our country safe. A vital part of this is reducing waste and abuse while guaranteeing our military has the resources it needs to remain the best in the world. Instead of overly broad across-the-board cuts, we can streamline procedures at the Department of Defense (DOD) and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to save taxpayer money and increase the capacity of national defense services to do their jobs. To promote these kinds of policies, New Dems have pushed for legislation including:

Rep. Aguilar's Report Language to Defense Authorization – Working based on New Democrat Coalition recommendations for procurement reform released in 2014, **Rep. Aguilar** collaborated with **Rep. Kilmer** in 2015 to add report language to the *National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA)* in committee to improve competition for Departmen of Defense (DOD) contracts and increase small business access to information necessary to make bids. The language pushes DOD to list regularly updated small business liaison contact information in a single, central location to reduce bureaucracy. The language was included in the version of NDAA that passed in committee and on the House floor in May 2015. For more information, see here.

Rep. Ashford's No Homeland Security, No Pay Act – H.R. 1032 – **Rep. Ashford's** bill – introduced with New Dems Rep. Bera, Rep. Graham, and Rep. Peters – would withhold pay from Members of Congress during a shutdown of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) equal to the product of one day's worth of pay. By doing so, this bill would help ensure that Congress never risks shutting down DHS over partisan politics, as nearly happened in early 2015. Political bickering should not jeopardize national security, and this bill would act as a mechanism to keep DHS functioning at all times. For more information, see here.

Rep. Connolly's Work to Implement Federal IT Reform Legislation – **Rep. Connolly's** Federal Information Technology Acquisition Reform Act (FITARA) was signed into law in 2014, but in 2015 he led a major, government-wide effort to implement the legislation, including through the creation of a report card to grade each federal agency on its progress in realizing new IT efficiencies and savings. When implemented, FITARA will apply private sector practices to streamline the federal government's purchase of technology products and services. For more information, see here.

Rep. Connolly's Competitive Service Act – H.R. 2827 – **Rep. Connolly's** bipartisan bill would streamline the federal government's hiring process and allow agencies to recruit and hire top talent more easily. Specifically, the bill would allow a federal agency to review

and select job candidates from another agency's "best qualified list" – for example, those who have already undergone a competitive assessment process and are certified as eligible for agency hiring. This could be a particularly valuable tool for hard-to-fill or mission-critical positions such as cybersecurity, information technology, or acquisition. The legislation is backed by a number of former federal executives, federal management organizations, and federal employee groups. In February 2016, the Senate version of the bill, S. 1580, passed the House unanimously. For more information, see here.

Rep. Peters' Amendment to Defense Authorization – Working based on New Democrat Coalition recommendations for procurement reform released in 2014, **Rep. Peters** collaborated with **Rep. Kilmer** in 2015 to add a measure to the *National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA)* to help decrease risk and volatility in the industrial base by requiring Department of Defense (DOD) to publish estimates of its yearly requirements and share that data with industry. This effort also called for an increase in DOD reporting on yearly requirements forecasts to provide industry a greater opportunity to remain viable and was included in the version of NDAA that passed in committee and on the House floor in May 2015.

Rep. Rice's Keeping our Travelers Safe and Secure Act – H.R. 2770 – **Rep. Rice's** bill, which passed the House on a unanimous vote, would help ensure that the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) uses effective contractors that maintain up-to-date equipment. Specifically, the bill directs the Transportation Security Administration to develop and implement a preventive maintenance process for security-related technology in airports and requires contracts to include penalties for noncompliance when preventive maintenance has not been completed. For more information, see here.

Rep. Smith's Relief From Sequestration Act – H.R. 4512 – **Rep. Adam Smith's** bill would repeal the sequestration mechanism in its entirety and help end the threat of future government shutdowns and unnecessarily harsh cuts to important national security priorities. This bill recognizes that sequestration is not necessary to reduce the budget deficit and takes a step toward recognizing that members of both parties can work together to craft a responsible budget that supports national security priorities. Sequestration was never intended to go into effect, but when it did it harmed national security through arbitrary spending cuts. For more information, see here.

III. Leverage the Latest Technologies to Boost Transparency and Accountability by Creating a "Yelp for Government"

To help make government work better, it needs to be easier for people to say what's working and what isn't. Now more than ever, we have the technological capacity to ensure government is held accountable and remains responsive to the people it's meant to serve. New Dems support implementing a "Yelp for Government" – a modern method of enabling those who interact with government agencies to provide feedback and more directly influence the process of government reform. To further this effort, New Dems have taken action including:

New Dem Letters on Yelp for Government – In July 2015, **Chairman Kind** sent a letter to the General Services Administration (GSA) urging it to come to an agreement with Yelp to integrate user reviews of government agencies. The letter called for GSA to swiftly conclude an agreement with Yelp to enable the federal government to fully utilize the application. Later that year, GSA finalized its agreement with Yelp, enabling federal agencies to use and claim their Yelp pages, similar to the way businesses already do. In October 2015 more than 20 New Dems signed a letter to Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Director Shaun Donovan urging him to work with federal agencies to integrate the Yelp platform into their operations and more effectively respond to constituent feedback. For the Coalition's press statements on Yelp for Government, see here and here.

IV. Lower Regulatory Obstacles to Innovation and Entrepreneurship

Adopted and implemented correctly, regulatory oversight can boost competition and make markets more effective for everyday people. Far too often, regulations impose obstacles to new businesses, running the risk of stifling growth and limiting entrepreneurial opportunities. In many cases, regulatory oversight protects middle class Americans but still needs fine-tuning to operate more effectively. To strike a smarter balance with federal rules and regulations, New Dems have proposed bills and support legislation including:

Rep. Bustos' Government Waste Reduction Act – H.R. 586 – **Rep. Bustos'** bill would create the Independent Government Waste Reduction Board, which would seek to reduce duplicative services, improve agency efficiencies, and root out waste in government while saving billions of dollars for taxpayers. The bill would also create a repository for best practices on how agencies can operate more efficiently and streamline operations to better serve taxpayers, entrepreneurs, and businesses that must navigate federal regulations. For more information, see here.

Rep. Bustos' Government Transformation Act – H.R. 2826 – **Rep. Bustos'** bill would establish a Commission on Government Transformation to review work done by government entities and research best practices for efficiency and effectiveness in reforming federal agencies. The Commission would also serve as a repository for best practices for federal agencies and would make annual reports to the President and Congress to reflect its findings. For more information, see here.

Rep. Connolly's Stronger Voice for Small Business Act – H.R. 1429 – **Rep. Connolly's** bipartisan bill, introduced with Rep. Mike Bost (R-IL), seeks to improve the Small Business Administration (SBA) appeals process. Specifically, the bill would permit businesses to directly appeal to the SBA Office of Hearings and Appeals when challenging an inappropriate size standard determination, a change that will save small businesses from costly and time-consuming litigation processes. The SBA's designation of a business as large or small has a major effect on determining whether it can apply for federal lending or financial assistance programs, as well as whether it receives preference in the competition for federal contracts. In order to grow jobs and hire more workers, small businesses must have certainty and clear definitions of the guidelines used to determine status. In May 2015, the bill passed the House attached to the *2016 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA)*. For more information on the bill's introduction, see here.

Rep. Murphy's Regulatory Improvement Act – H.R. 1407 – **Rep. Murphy's** bill would create a bipartisan commission similar to the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) commissions used to reallocate Department of Defense (DOD) resources and priorities for military bases. This commission would periodically review existing regulations to reduce

regulatory compliance costs, encourage growth and innovation, and improve competitiveness—all while protecting public health and safety. The commission would start by focusing on out-of-date and zombie regulations most likely in need of reform, specifically those over 10 years old that have never been updated. For more information, see here.

The TSCA Modernization Act – H.R. 2576 – In June 2015, the House passed the *TSCA Modernization Act* on a strong bipartisan vote, with New Dems unanimously supporting the bill. The legislation, which updates the *Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA)*, would help the U.S. move toward a more streamlined, nationwide chemical regulatory policy and give the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) more authority to strike a more effective balance in overseeing chemical policy. In December 2015, an amended version of the bill passed the Senate, which now awaits conference committee action.

V. Reform Our Broken Campaign Finance System

In today's political system, it's too often the case that getting elected is more about who raises the most money instead of who has the best ideas for fostering growth and prosperity. This reliance on raising money tilts the playing field toward those who can write big checks instead of the majority of Americans. Campaign finance laws are rife with loopholes and too much of our electoral system lacks needed transparency. To restore fairness to the modern campaign finance system, New Dems have voiced support for efforts including:

Rep. Kilmer's Restoring Integrity to America's Elections – H.R. 2931 – **Rep. Kilmer's** bipartisan bill would make the Federal Election Commission (FEC) more functional by reducing the number of commissioners to eliminate stalemate decisions, increasing its independence, and establishing a panel to recommend new members and other modifications. While political campaigns and outside groups have swelled with money and complexity, this bill takes steps to improve the often-dysfunctional watchdog agency that exists to oversee the system. This bill is the first major bipartisan FEC reform bill since McCain-Feingold. For more information, see here.

Chairman Kind's Campaign Transparency Act – H.R. 4286 – **Chairman Kind's** bill would eliminate reporting thresholds for reporting on campaign donors and the amounts they contribute to political campaigns. The bill would support transparency in campaigns and make it easier to understand the sources of campaign contributions by requiring campaigns to disclose all donations of any amount of money. Additionally, the bill would help ensure single donors do not unintentionally exceed legal caps on donations by making multiple contributions of less than $200. For more information, see here.

Rep. O'Rourke's Real Time Transparency Act – H.R. 3854 – **Rep. O'Rourke's** bill would bring disclosure of campaign contributions into the 21st century by requiring campaigns to publicly disclose, within 48 hours, direct contributions of $1,000 or more. The bill would allow voters to better monitor and evaluate whether and to what extent campaign contributions influence elected officials running for reelection. Especially when it comes to large contributions, citizens need to know the source of money in politics to best evaluate whether a candidate is being unreasonably influenced by a particular donor or industry. For more information, see here.

New Dem Support for Government By the People Act – H.R. 20 – The *Government By the People Act*, cosponsored by almost 40 New Dems, seeks to reduce the influence of money in politics and give everyday Americans a larger voice in our democracy through increasing the power of small donors. Specifically, the bill takes a three-pronged approach by 1) providing a $25 My Voice Tax Credit to regular donors for campaign contributions, 2) creating a six-to-one match for small contributions by using a Freedom From Influence

Fund, and 3) allowing citizen-funded candidates to combat Super PACs and outside groups by earning additional matching funds within 60 days of an election. For more information, see here.

New Dem Support for the DISCLOSE Act – H.R. 430 – The *Disclosure of Information on Spending on Campaigns Leads to Open and Secure Elections (DISCLOSE) Act*, cosponsored by almost 30 New Dems, seeks to limit the disproportionate influence of organizations like Super PACs and other major campaign contributors. The bill would require increased disclosure of independent expenditures that on aggregate support a particular candidate. Specifically, the bill would increase reporting requirements for corporations, labor organizations, and certain other entities while also increasing disclaimer requirements for campaign-related disbursements and other similar communications. For more information, see here.

VI. Make It Easier for Americans to Vote and Participate in Our Democracy

Our democracy works best when it is just that – a democracy. That means that everyone needs unhindered access to the ballot box and the chance to have an equal voice in the electoral process. When Americans face limitations to voting and participating in the political process, it undermines the point of having elections in the first place – to ensure the thoughts of all Americans are represented in Congress. To promote wider access to and participation in our democracy, New Dems have introduced legislation, including:

Rep. Beyer's Pre-Registration of Voters Everywhere (PROVE) Act – H.R. 3522 - **Rep. Beyer's** bill would create a federal, uniform, standard minimum age of sixteen-years-old to pre-register to vote. Once future voters pre-register, they would be in voter files and automatically added to voter rolls when they turn eighteen. Increasing the ability of young people to pre-register to vote would help them engage faster and more directly in the democratic process. Additionally, the bill would provide grant assistance for states to develop civics education curriculum to encourage involvement of minors in elections. For more information, see here.

Reps. Connolly and Quigley's Cameras in Courtrooms Act – H.R. 94 – This bill, introduced by **Rep. Connolly** and **Rep. Quigley**, seeks to ensure transparency and accountability in the judicial branch by televising open proceedings before the United States Supreme Court. The Supreme Court currently allocates roughly 50 seats for the general public to view open proceedings, while the proceedings of Congress are widely televised. By increasing public awareness and oversight of the Supreme Court, this bill would work to better inform voters and hold the judicial system accountable. For more information, see here and here.

Rep. Cooper's Taxpayers Right-To-Know Act – H.R. 598 – **Rep. Cooper's** bipartisan bill, introduced with Rep. Tim Walberg (R-MI), passed the House on a unanimous vote in January 2016. The bill would make it easier for Americans to understand how taxpayer money is spent by requiring the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) website to operate a program inventory that identifies each program of the federal government for which there is more than $1 million in annual budget authority. The website would also be required to display information on the costs of programs, their statutory authority, evaluations of the programs, and other relevant information for facilitating transparency. For more information, see here.

Rep. Larsen's America Votes Act – H.R. 3364 – **Rep. Larsen's** bill seeks to strengthen the democratic process and protect voters' rights by making it easier for voters to cast ballots without facing burdensome I.D. requirements. The bill would allow voters arriving at polls without the identification required by their state to submit a sworn, written statement

affirming their identity, just as absentee voters do with their ballots, and then cast a standard ballot. This bill would help reduce discriminatory effects from biased election officials and overly restrictive voter I.D. laws. For more information, see here.

Rep. Quigley's Transparency in Government Act – H.R. 1381 – **Rep. Quigley's** bill would bring unprecedented access and accountability to all branches of the federal government. The bill would improve transparency throughout the federal government by focusing on utilizing new technologies, increasing disclosures for both lobbyists and lawmakers, strengthening oversight of federal spending, and improving judicial transparency. The bill also makes understanding the inner workings of government more understandable by making already publically available data searchable, sortable, machine-readable, and downloadable for everyday Americans. For more information, see here.

Rep. Quigley's Taxpayer Receipt Act – H.R. 3855 – **Rep. Quigley's** bill would provide each American with an itemized tax receipt showing how taxpayer dollars are spent, as well as how much the federal government borrows per person. Just as grocery receipts keep consumers accountable for purchases, a tax receipt would help keep our government accountable for federal spending. The bill would provide a written receipt for those filing paper tax returns and an electronic receipt for those that e-file. The receipt would include a breakdown of each individual's contributions to Social Security, defense spending, Medicare, and other federal programs, as well as the total amount of federal debt and how much the federal government has borrowed per citizen. For more information, see here.

Rep. Sewell's Voting Rights Advancement Act – H.R. 2867 – **Rep. Sewell's** bill seeks to restore the full protections of the landmark *Voting Rights Act of 1965*, particularly to combat restrictive voting laws that disproportionately suppress turnout among minorities, young adults, and the elderly. This bill would create a new coverage formula to check voting rights violations and establish a targeted process for reviewing voting changes based on measures that have historically been used to discriminate. The bill would also take steps to protect voting rights immediately before and during elections and increase accessibility for Native American and Alaska Native voters. For more information, see here.

VII. End Gerrymandering So Voters Choose their Elected Officials; Not the Other Way Around

In too many states, gerrymandered districts distort the electorate and mean that those already in power stay there. All too often, drawing Congressional districts becomes a partisan process that undermines an accurate representation of voters in states and districts. In 2012, a majority of Americans voted for a Democrat to represent them in Congress, but the House of Representatives saw Republicans maintain control because of gerrymandered districts across the country. Similarly, only 20 percent of House districts are considered competitive by the Cook Political Report's Partisan Voting Index and the number of swing seats has fallen to a record low 90 of 435. Our democracy is best when it remains competitive and the person who works hardest and proposes the smartest, best ideas gets elected. To help uphold this fundamental tenet of the American political system, New Dems have supported action including:

Rep. Cooper's Redistricting Transparency Act – H.R. 1346 – **Rep. Cooper's** bill would require states to post redistricting information online, including the data used in the redistricting process, details of the process, proposed maps, and public hearing dates. The bill would also require that members of the public be allowed to submit comments before maps are approved. By shedding light on oftentimes broken redistricting procedures, this bill would help increase public awareness of gerrymandering and take a step in the right direction of reducing partisanship and gridlock in Congress. For more information, see here.

Rep. Cooper's John Tanner Fairness in Redistricting Act – H.R. 1347 – **Rep. Cooper's** bill would require each state to establish an independent, bipartisan redistricting commission to redraw congressional district lines, once every 10 years, that reflect contiguous communities rather than carved-out, gerrymandered districts that protect political parties. In doing so, the bill would help take politics and partisanship out of the congressional redistricting process. Instead of relying on partisan incentives, independent commissions tend to create a larger number of competitive districts, ultimately contributing to a reduction in the gridlock and stalemate in Congress. For more information, see here

Rep. Delaney's Open Our Democracy Act – H.R. 2655 – **Rep. Delaney's** bill targets three elements that feed polarization and gridlock in Congress: closed primary elections, gerrymandered Congressional districts, and low voter turnout. The bill would require the Government Accountability Office (GAO) to conduct a study of redistricting processes and their impact on minority and local community representation. It would also require GAO to submit a report to Congress with legislative recommendations for federal standards requiring the creation of independent redistricting commissions. If a Member in either

chamber introduced GAO's legislative recommendations as a bill, the *Open Our Democracy Act* would provide a mechanism to ensure the bill received a vote. **Rep. Delaney's** bill would also create a national holiday on general election day and shift all House and Senate primaries to a top-two system. For more information, see here.