

The key to getting our economy back on track and getting Americans back to work is finding ways to help private-sector businesses thrive. As someone who started and ran his own small business for nearly 30 years, I understand the challenges these businesses face, and, as a member of the House Committee on Small Business, I will continue to push for common sense policies that will reduce the tax and regulatory burden under which entrepreneurs and business owners must operate. If we do this, it will give businesses the incentives to grow and hire more workers, unleash the entrepreneurial spirit of the American people, and promote real, sustainable economic growth. While we need to pursue these kinds of reforms within our current system, in the end I believe we need to eliminate the income tax and replace it with the FairTax - a national sales tax that would replace all other forms of federal taxation. Rather than taxing productivity, like our current tax system, the FairTax would foster economic growth, keep American businesses competitive in the international marketplace, hinder tax-evasion, and encourage investment.

We must also balance the federal budget, which will help to restore confidence to financial markets around the world, give banks the confidence to begin lending once again to small businesses, and ensure that the next generation of American entrepreneurs are not saddled with excessive taxes. As the new Republican majority begins its work in the 112th Congress, it inherits one of the worst budget situations our nation has ever seen. The annual deficit is now \$1.14 trillion, and the national debt is now at a record \$14 trillion. In 2006, when President Obama was still in the Senate, he said that “increasing America’s debt weakens us domestically and internationally,” and that “leadership” means not “shifting the burden of bad choices today onto the backs of our children and grandchildren.” I couldn’t agree more, and I plan on fighting every day here in Congress to reduce federal spending and get our nation’s fiscal house in order.

However, we cannot fix our nation's finances without an honest, grown-up conversation about entitlement reform. The two biggest entitlements, Social Security and Medicare, are each insolvent, and a crisis is around the corner if we continue to ignore the problem and fail to act. Since Americans who are nearing retirement age and those who are already retired paid into Social Security and Medicare their entire working lives, Congress must ensure that they receive the benefits they rightfully expect and have been promised. However, the fact remains that Social Security and Medicare face serious solvency problems in the long term, and the unfunded liabilities of these programs range in the tens of trillions of dollars. If we do nothing to reform them, future beneficiaries will receive only a small percentage of their promised benefits – if they receive anything at all. For this reason, we must look for common-sense reforms that will provide the benefits promised to those near or in retirement while at the same time protecting Social Security and Medicare for future generations.