



“The vows of this nation can only be fulfilled if we are first, and therefore, we intend to be first. Our leadership in science and in industry, our hopes for peace and security, our obligations to ourselves as well as others, all require us to make this effort.”

- President John F. Kennedy

In answering President John F. Kennedy’s bold call to put a man on the moon, America unleashed unprecedented technological advances that built the world’s most vibrant economy. The talent, intellect, and entrepreneurial spirit of the American people that made this nation the leader is being seriously challenged by other countries. Americans must continue to innovate in order to create new thriving industries that will produce millions of good jobs here at home and a better future for the next generation.

INNOVATION AGENDA

Over the past two years, House Democrats led forums across this country with leaders from the academic, high-technology, venture capital, biotech, and telecommunications sectors, as well as with students and young entrepreneurs. Using their expertise and advice, we developed solutions that will help guarantee our national security and prosperity, expand markets for American products, and assert economic leadership throughout the world in the decades to come.

The Innovation Agenda: A Commitment to Competitiveness to Keep America #1 will:

Create a new generation of innovators: an educated, skilled workforce in the vital areas of science, math, engineering, and information technology;

Make a sustained federal research and development commitment that promotes private sector innovation;

Spur affordable access to broadband technology;

Achieve energy independence, strengthen our national security, and protect our planet by developing emerging technologies for clean and sustainable alternatives;

Provide small businesses with the tools to encourage entrepreneurial innovation and job creation throughout our economy.

Our future prosperity demands that we initiate this sustained financial and intellectual investment in innovation. Our competitiveness in a global economy also relies on ensuring that our children and grandchildren are not burdened by failed fiscal policies that have exploded the national debt. That is why we will submit these priorities to the rigors of “pay-as-you-go” budgeting to ensure that new spending or tax cuts do not add to the deficit.

The American people have always excelled at leading the world. With this bold agenda, our nation will continue to be the world leader in education, innovation, and economic growth. In the words of President Kennedy, “We intend to be first.”

A COMMITMENT TO COMPETITIVENESS TO KEEP AMERICA #1

A NEW GENERATION OF INNOVATORS

America's greatest resource for innovation resides within classrooms across the country. With a new commitment more of our students will be trained in math, science, and technology to turn ideas into innovative technologies. Future innovators must reflect the diversity of our country, and we must provide opportunities for every qualified student, including minorities and women. Democrats will ensure that today's students are taught to high academic standards at all levels of learning and receive the workplace skills that are necessary for preparing a new generation of scientists, engineers, and mathematicians to compete in this global high technology economy.

To achieve this goal, we will:

Educate 100,000 new innovators in the next five years. We propose a new public-private partnership with the business community and higher education institutions to produce well-qualified, highly-skilled workers by establishing Congressional Science fellowships and interdisciplinary Master's programs in science, engineering, and math that include specialized training and internships with business partners, and loan forgiveness options.

Place a highly qualified teacher in math, science, and technology K-12 classrooms by offering upfront tuition assistance to talented undergraduates majoring in math, science or engineering who agree to teach in a high needs school, investing in 25,000 new teachers through professional development, summer training institutes, graduate education assistance, and scholarships, and partnering community colleges with four-year institutions to improve the teacher pipeline.

Enhance the ability of states to coordinate education and workforce goals, identify the challenges of recruiting students and retaining them in innovative fields, and develop collaborative solutions through statewide coalitions of education, business, and community leaders, such as P-16+ Councils.

Make college more affordable for all students by cutting the interest rates on student loans and increasing the Pell Grant award.

Ensure, as part of bipartisan and comprehensive immigration reform, that the best and brightest in the United States and around the world are able to contribute to innovation here.

A SUSTAINED COMMITMENT TO RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

Independent scientific research provides the foundation for innovation and future technologies. But U.S. federal funding for research and development has declined steadily over the last decade, and sound science has been compromised by political interference. Democrats will increase the federal commitment to research aimed at developing the next generation of sound scientific breakthroughs, and we will promote the public-private partnerships necessary to translate these new ideas into marketable technologies.

To achieve this goal, we will:

Double funding for the National Science Foundation, the National Institute of Standards and Technology, and the Department of Energy's Office of Science within the next 10 years and make a long-term, sustained commitment to these crucial investments in basic research and development and those at other agencies that serve as the building blocks of technological advancement.

Provide grants for outstanding researchers in the early stages of their careers, establish a Presidential innovation award, and create a national coordination office to identify and prioritize research infrastructure needs at universities and national laboratories.

Modernize and extend a globally-competitive R&D tax credit to increase domestic investment and create more high-quality American jobs.

Improve protections of the intellectual property of American innovators worldwide, strengthen the patent system, and end the diversion of patent fees.

PROMOTE PUBLIC- PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS

ENERGY INDEPENDENCE

America must implement a bold energy strategy to maintain our economic competitiveness, strengthen our national security, and help combat global warming. A vibrant and skilled workforce combined with clean energy technologies will be the economic engine of the 21st century and create new, high-paying jobs.

To achieve this goal, we will:

Strengthen our national commitment to energy research and innovation. Create a new DARPA-like initiative to provide the talent and resources for the research and development of high-risk, high-reward energy technologies, and attract investment for the next generation of revolutionary technologies.

Reduce our dependence on foreign oil. Expand production and distribution of clean domestically-produced fuels with an emphasis on cellulosic ethanol.

Expand and extend long-term renewable energy incentives to spur the development and adoption of new energy technologies and to signal that there is a market that will support them.

Enhance technology-driven energy efficiency. Save energy to help consumers and businesses cope with high energy bills, reduce greenhouse gas emissions to protect the health of our planet, and strengthen our economy by generating American jobs and capital investment.

CLEAN, SUSTAINABLE ENERGY ALTERNATIVES

AFFORDABLE BROADBAND ACCESS FOR ALL AMERICANS

Nationwide deployment of high speed, always-on broadband Internet and mobile communications will fuel the development of millions of new jobs in the United States. Just as railroads and highways did in the past, broadband and mobile communications will dramatically increase the productivity and efficiency of our economy in the future and bring more Americans into an online global community and marketplace. In education, broadband will provide greater access to information, expanded curricula, and real-time collaboration across borders and boundaries. In health care, broadband will enable advanced electronic health technology to improve patient care and vastly reduce costs. In communications, broadband will make the convergence of information, media, and telecommunications a reality, and services such as Voice over IP and video on demand will be pervasive. Democrats will ensure that the United States has the telecommunications infrastructure to bridge the digital divide so that every American will have access to affordable and robust broadband Internet service and communications technology.

To achieve this goal, we will:

Ensure accountability for broadband services by changing the methodology that the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) uses to measure broadband deployment and requiring better surveys to report on broadband speed and prices.

Provide grants to communities to demonstrate high bandwidth applications and establish community networking centers to ensure access to computers and high-speed broadband, particularly in underserved communities.

Develop a national broadband access map in partnership with state governments. By knowing where broadband is currently deployed, we can target federal broadband resources to reach our rural and underserved communities.

Expand access to broadband in rural communities by ensuring that Rural Utilities Service broadband initiatives effectively target underserved areas in rural America and account for the unique obstacles faced by broadband providers in rural regions of the country.

Encourage the FCC to adopt rules that will lead to the development and rapid deployment of new wireless broadband technologies and ensure efficient and intensive use of the electromagnetic spectrum in order to promote economic opportunity, competition, and innovation.

SMALL BUSINESS TOOLS FOR INNOVATION

Small businesses are the catalysts for technological innovation. The evolution from idea to marketable product, guided by a successful small business plan, has led to entrepreneurial successes that have fueled our technological revolution and will be the key to continued job growth in the future. Yet small businesses face significant hurdles, both regulatory and market-based, that thwart the effort to transform ideas into jobs. Removing these hurdles is a key component of this Innovation Agenda.

To achieve this goal, we will:

Fund proven public-private partnerships. Double funding within 10 years for the Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP), which leverages federal, state, and private investments to implement and stimulate new manufacturing processes and technologies.

Create a new initiative, the Technology Innovation Program (TIP), to better reflect global innovation competition by funding high-risk, high-reward, pre-competitive technology development, focusing on small and medium-sized companies.

Modernize the Small Business Innovation Research Program (SBIR) by streamlining paperwork for businesses, ensuring companies receive grants in a timely manner, reducing the lag time between the award phases, providing additional funding for the commercialization phase, and allowing venture capital invested businesses to participate in the program.

Help ensure access to capital for small businesses by maximizing loan eligibility for 7(a) and 504 small business loans and reviving Small Business Investment Companies (SBIC) to ensure that American small businesses have the resources and technical assistance they need to successfully innovate.

REWARD RISK-TAKING

THESE COMMITMENTS, TAKEN TOGETHER,
REPRESENT A DECISION IN FAVOR OF THE
FUTURE AND A VISION FOR A STRONGER
AMERICA.



The Innovation Agenda is aimed at our common future and reflects our most basic value that when the American people work together, for the common good, there is no challenge too great.



To meet the challenges of today, and to create the jobs and economic security of tomorrow, we must act now.



Congress has begun to work in a bipartisan way to implement the Innovation Agenda: A Commitment to Competitiveness to Keep America #1.



America will be stronger. We will assert our global economic leadership, create new business ventures and jobs, and give future generations their own opportunity to achieve the American Dream.

