

## **Congress' New Year's Resolution: Improve U.S. Competitiveness**

There is no doubt that the sluggish economy will continue to be the number one challenge to our nation's future prosperity. While there have been some signs of modest growth, the fact is the rate of the current recovery is far too weak to help the millions of unemployed and underemployed Americans who continue to struggle every day just to make ends meet.

The key to our economic recovery is job creation. In order to expand and hire new workers, American companies must have the ability to compete globally. Unfortunately, U.S. competitiveness has slipped in recent years. Once the leader in global economic competitiveness the World Economic Forum now ranks the United States fifth in the world. Our nation has never settled for second best, and we can not start now. This year, Washington's New Year's resolution to the American people should be to bolster economic growth and job creation by strengthening our nation's competitiveness in the international economy.

To be successful, we must continue to focus on getting our skyrocketing national debt under control, cut wasteful government spending, and remove the barriers faced by American companies as a result of misguided government regulations. In addition, we must work to ensure that U.S. policies and regulations support the ability of domestic companies to be competitive and productive in the international marketplace. It is also vital that we promote the stability and openness of international markets so that the innovation of American companies can thrive in the global marketplace and contribute to robust economic growth.

To be sure, tremendous strides have been made. After years of needless partisan delays, three vital trade agreements with South Korea, Panama, and Columbia were finally signed into law in 2011. By eliminating most of the burdensome tariffs that make our goods more expensive abroad, these trade agreements will increase demand for U.S. products and services, which will promote economic opportunity and job creation here at home. It is estimated that these agreements will provide \$13 billion in new exports each year, and lead to the creation of 250,000 jobs. The President and Congress must continue to work together in the New Year to seize every opportunity available to promote American products and services overseas.

Congress must also work to reform our tax code and make it simpler, flatter, and fairer. We currently have one of the highest corporate tax rates in the world. This places American companies at a severe disadvantage with foreign competitors both at home and abroad. Reforming the complex code will allow U.S. corporations to revitalize their domestic operations, increase our ability to compete for international investment, create and preserve jobs, and save time and money for taxpayers and job creators.

Despite the gridlock that has taken hold in Washington, I remain confident that we can overcome these difficult economic challenges. I look forward to working in the House of Representatives this session to help our economy grow and create jobs by restoring the

United States to its position as the world leader in innovation and the best place to do business.

*Rep. Gary Miller represents California's 42nd Congressional District.*