

## **Setting Partisanship Aside is the Best Way to Achieve a Better Future**

By Rep. Steny Hoyer (D-Md.)

Four years ago, President Obama took office against a backdrop of severe job losses, an auto industry on the brink of collapse and a housing market shaken by a foreclosure crisis. The very foundations of the American Dream appeared to be faltering. As he stood to address an anxious nation, our new president declared that “the state of our economy calls for action, bold and swift.”

As we prepare to watch the president take the oath of office a second time, we look back on four years of action by his administration to strengthen our economy that was indeed bold and swift. The Recovery Act saved millions from losing their jobs. New programs helped families with underwater mortgages to remain in their homes. While some said our auto industry ought to be allowed to fail, Obama and Democrats made a bet on America’s workers, and that bet continues to yield dividends to our wider economy.

But as much as the president has been able to achieve these victories, there is still much work to be done, and bold action ought to continue.

However, over the past two years, too much bitter partisanship has gotten in the way of real progress on the most important economic issues: creating jobs, reducing deficits and protecting middle-class opportunities for the next generation.

The American people have once again clearly indicated the direction they want our country to go, and with their votes they sent a message that Democrats and Republicans in Congress must work together to solve our greatest challenges. Bipartisan compromise has long been the forge on which our democracy is strengthened, and we need to tap once again into that tradition

to move our country forward.

There are many ways Congress can fail, but rising above the differences of party to embrace that which unites us as Americans is the best guarantee of success. Our challenges will not wait; neither can we delay in meeting those challenges in a spirit of cooperation.

When it comes to creating jobs, Americans are looking to their leaders in Congress to cultivate an environment where businesses can succeed, expand operations and hire for middle-class jobs that pay well and won't be shipped overseas. We know that, to boost our competitiveness, we need a comprehensive plan to invest in innovation, education, infrastructure and the growth of manufacturing. House Democrats' "Make it in America" plan is focused on those priorities. While a number of Make it in America bills have become law, there is more to be done to revitalize American manufacturing and the jobs that come with it.

In order to have a strong economy, we also need to get our fiscal house in order. Reining in deficits will not be possible unless both parties are willing to reach a reasonable compromise. Neither further revenues nor entitlements can be off the table.

By working together to make the tough choices we know are necessary, we can achieve what has so far proven elusive. Only a big and balanced approach, combining spending cuts with new revenues, is sufficient to meet the challenge we face. That must continue to be our goal, and it is all the more attainable if those in Congress can set party aside and put country first.

At the same time, we must ensure that the policies Congress sets in place do not put at risk the most vulnerable in our society. Instead we ought to be legislating with an eye toward growing our middle class and helping more Americans enter the middle class by ensuring access to opportunities to attend school, find a job, afford homeownership, obtain health insurance and save for retirement. Neither party wants to see the opportunities that encompass the American Dream diminish, and we have a responsibility to work together to preserve and enhance them.