

WASHINGTON, DC - Congressman Steny H. Hoyer (D-MD) met with the Greater Washington Board of Trade (GWBOT) in Greenbelt, Maryland on Friday, January 26, to deliver an update on the 110th Congress and lead a discussion on issues important to the regional business community.

“I’ve always thought of you as steadfast partners in growing a robust and prosperous economy here in the D.C. Metro Area,” Hoyer said in his remarks to the approximately 30 attendees. “The greater Washington region has led the nation in job growth over the past 25 years, with 1.12 million jobs added between 1983 and 2003, and nearly 275,000 jobs added in the last five years. I am confident that our public-private partnership is going to lend itself to continuing this outstanding trajectory of progress throughout the duration of the 110th Congress.”

During the meeting, Rep. Hoyer provided an overview of the Democratic Majority’s “100 Hours Agenda,” touting the benefits of the legislation for regional businesses and the economy. Included in the approved agenda is legislation to increase the federal minimum wage, cut student loan rates, enact the 9/11 Commission recommendations, mandate fiscal responsibility, and foster greater investments in stem cell research and renewable energy development. Hoyer also noted that each of the measures passed with large bipartisan majorities.

“If enacted into law, these measures present great opportunities for significant growth right here in our own backyard,” stated Hoyer. “We made a lot of progress in the first month of the 110th Congress, but what is most impressive is that we have done so in a bipartisan manner, earning significant support from both sides of the aisle.”

Rep. Hoyer also addressed several other legislative matters followed closely by the GWBOT, including D.C. voting rights, transportation and homeland security funding. Rep. Hoyer reported that he is working closely with Delegate Eleanor Holmes-Norton and House leadership towards establishing full voting representation in the U.S. House for the citizens of Washington, D.C. He also spoke about his efforts, along with the regional delegation, to dedicate funding sources for the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority.

Addressing another key issue for the region, Rep. Hoyer reported that the Department of Homeland Security has announced a change in the distribution process of Urban Area Security Initiative dollars. Last year the National Capital Region experienced a highly irresponsible cut in its Homeland Security grants, from \$77 million to \$46 million – a 40 percent reduction. Secretary Chertoff has indicated that in the future these funds will be distributed with more consideration

given to the risk of terrorism and a subjective rating of the effectiveness of local anti-terrorism programs. Six high-risk urban areas, including the National Capital Region, will now compete for \$411 million, enabling the DC area to make much-needed investments in our security.

“As I said before, the 110th Congress is going to present significant opportunities for us to work together to strengthen our region,” concluded Hoyer. “It is critical that we continue to have an open dialogue on these federal issues which are so very important to our region, our communities, and our families.”

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