

Our congressional district is home to thousands of large and, mostly, small businesses. Some are farm and ranch partnerships, some are retail establishments, some are restaurants, some are hospitals and some are value-added manufacturing outfits. We have industrial sectors from A for agriculture to Z for zinc where Missourians are gainfully employed at good stable jobs. Small businesses employ more than half of our workforce locally and nationally.

For our economy to grow, we need to create more jobs and expand opportunity. If just half of our employers in the congressional district decided to expand by one employee, we could easily add 1,500 jobs to the workforce.

I'm asking each business in Southern Missouri to consider what it would take to create one more job and to let me know. As we work together to create a dynamic economy that creates more opportunity, the goal is to take advantage of the incredible workforce, the unparalleled quality of life, and the beautiful surroundings of Southern Missouri. With a jobs economy to match, we can continue to lead the state, the nation and the world in innovative areas of technology, agricultural science and value-added manufacturing.

Yet there are barriers to growth that prevent our region from achieving its full economic potential.

It is so important that we work together to make the case for economic growth. With the ideas and feedback from thousands of Missouri businesses, and even people thinking about starting a business and hiring more workers, we can promote a stronger economy.

And building an argument full of real-world examples of how we can create jobs really makes difference. In the last year, we have successfully argued against regulations at the Environmental Protection Agency that would have found our rural counties in violation of air quality standards meant for urban polluters. We've undone federal rules forcing dairy operations to store their milk in accordance with federal standards for oil. We've passed legislation in the House of Representatives to stop regulations targeted at boilers, cement manufacturers and the use of forest products. All of these things have saved real jobs in Southern Missouri.

I'm sure there are countless more examples of new certainty we can provide to Southern Missouri small businesses. Many would be helped by more clarity from the federal tax code. Others are looking ahead to the implementation of the Affordable Care Act and realizing it will increase the costs and regulations heaped upon them by the federal bureaucracy. Still others are concerned about instability in energy markets and the continued reluctance of America to explore oil and natural gas deposits on our own soil.

I'm in favor of all of these ideas, but I know there are more areas where we can work together to bring new opportunities to light. That's why I'm listening and my door is always open. I've heard tremendous plans from many in our region with great ideas for new businesses. We'll bring more jobs home from overseas, we'll create new industries where Missouri and America can be leaders, and we will restore innovation to industries that have struggled under the burdens placed on their shoulders by the federal government.

We'll create hope and opportunity. And we need to do as much to promote our Missouri economy as humanly possible.