

**Congressman Jason Altmire**  
**Member, U.S. House of Representatives**  
**Message to Small Business**

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America's small businesses are the backbone of our nation's economy. Over the past 15 years, small businesses have created nearly two-thirds of all new jobs and today they employ over half of all private sector employees. As our nation continues to recover from its most severe recession in more than 70 years, America's small businesses are playing a critical role in leading us back to prosperity.

Here in western Pennsylvania, we have seen firsthand how small businesses can help drive economic growth. Over the last twenty years, innovative entrepreneurs in a number of different industries have helped to transform our local economy. Today, an area that was once known as the Rust Belt is reinventing itself as the Tech Belt, a destination for venture capital investors and high-tech enterprises.

I have had countless conversations with local entrepreneurs about what it takes to succeed. As we all know, it takes vision and an extraordinary work ethic. It also takes a significant amount of capital to get started. Absent affordable credit, startups cannot launch and existing businesses cannot expand or hire more workers.

Unfortunately, the economic downturn has made it difficult for many small businesses to secure the loans and capital that they need. Congress has taken a number of steps to help alleviate this credit crunch. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, which increased the federal guarantee on many Small Business Administration loans, has supported more than \$26 billion in lending to date. This September, Congress also passed the Small Business Jobs Act, a new law that provides even more incentives for community banks to increase their small business lending.

The Small Business Jobs Act also included a number of important tax benefits that will help reduce the tax burden for small businesses. It doubles small business expensing, doubles the tax deduction for start-up expenditures, and allows self-employed individuals to deduct health insurance costs when paying taxes in 2010.

Finally, it is clear that if we want to help America's small business owners succeed; we need to make sure that the government is not saddling them with unnecessary regulations. I voted against flawed cap-and-trade and health care reform proposals for exactly this reason. Now, I am working to eliminate the 1099 reporting requirements that were included in health care reform to ensure that small business owners will not be burdened with more unnecessary paperwork.

As our economy continues to recover, I want to hear your ideas about what else we can do to help small businesses grow. You are the experts and you know better than anyone what it takes to create and keep good paying jobs in western Pennsylvania. I look forward to continuing to work with you to further our economic recovery and build a better future for our country.