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Dear Friends,

The end of 2011 marks the halfway point of the 112th Congress. This has been a difficult year for many American families, and Congress is still working hard to get our sluggish economy back on track as we look forward to a new year's worth of opportunities.

In November, the unemployment rate reached its lowest point since March 2009, at 8.6 percent. While this is still too high and we have a ways to go, it is encouraging to see some improvement and to know that there are men and women going back to work. Over the past year, the House of Representatives has passed several important pieces of legislation to create jobs and boost the economy. Here are a few highlights that I have recently supported in the House:

- **Veterans Opportunity to Work Act:** Develops programs to educate and retrain veterans for new employment, while improving the Transition Assistance Program to assist those currently looking for work.

- **Regulatory Flexibility Improvements Act:** Closes loopholes by requiring agencies to examine both the direct and indirect impact new regulations will have on small businesses, which will help promote production and improve economic growth.

- **Regulatory Accountability Act:** Reforms the regulatory process and requires that in proposing a new regulation, an agency must consider: its legal authority to do so, whether existing regulations have created or contributed to the problem and any reasonable alternatives to the new regulation.

- **Entrepreneur Access to Capital Act:** Promotes small business growth by creating financing options, allowing entrepreneurs to raise up to \$2 million from an unlimited number of investors who may give up to \$10,000 each.

- **Free Trade Agreements:** Creates new markets for American goods and services and will level the playing field in the global marketplace with our competitors, allowing businesses to grow and expand.

- **Regulation of the Executive in Need of Scrutiny (REINS) Act:** Requires Congressional approval of any new major rule by an executive agency that has an annual effect on the economy of \$100 million or more.

- **3% Withholding Repeal:** Removes a measure from law that would withhold 3% on certain payments made to vendors by government entities.

The last three items have actually been signed into law by the President in the past two months, while the others are awaiting consideration by the Senate. To date, the House has passed 28 bills that currently await Senate consideration that are focused on supporting our nation's small businesses and promoting job creation. You can see a detailed list of the bills on the [Jobs Tracker](#).

We have another year left of the 112th Congress to keep these ideas moving and to pursue new ones. I remain committed to supporting the workers and small businesses that will strengthen our economy, while reducing burdensome bureaucracy and regulation. As we continue to address budget concerns in the upcoming weeks, I will continue to work to bring spending down to a practical, sustainable level, and to alleviate the burden on taxpayers. I'm always interested in your questions and input on how I can best serve the people of Missouri, so please feel free to contact me about the issues that concern you.

If you would like to stay more informed about Congress, please sign up [now](#) to receive my regular email updates. Don't worry, I'm not interested in spamming your inbox. When the House of Representatives is in session, I try to send out one email a week. And if you want to stop receiving my emails at any time, just follow the unsubscribe link at the top or bottom of every email you receive.

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In addition to the email newsletter, you can always find me on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) for the most current updates on the issues that are important to Missouri.

Sincerely,

W. Todd Akin

