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**BOB**  
**ABBOUD**

U . S . C O N G R E S S

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## **ABBOUD PROPOSES SMALL BUSINESS PACKAGE DESIGNED TO REVERSE PAST ECONOMIC FAILURES**

Incentives would include increased access to affordable health care coverage

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ROCKFORD – Congressional candidate and small business owner Bob Abboud on Tuesday proposed a package of tax incentives and reforms designed to support American small businesses, including a new online application process for federal grants and access to health care coverage.

“Small businesses are the economic engine of our community and our country,” Abboud said. “They represent more than half of our total workforce and they are drowning. If we don’t help them now, we are putting the entire U.S. economy in serious jeopardy — a point that Congressman Don Manzullo failed to recognize when he recently opposed the Renewable Energy and Job Creation Act, which helps boost eco-friendly economic development and creates jobs in northern Illinois.”

According to the U.S. Small Business Administration, small businesses employ 58.6 million workers and are responsible for creating up to 80 percent of new jobs. In 2004, small businesses were responsible for all new job creation.

In a recent survey the National Small Business Association found that sales and profits had dropped and job growth was at its lowest point in 15 years. The survey also found that 71 percent of business owners have a negative outlook on the economy. Only 43 percent shared that sentiment a year ago.

“When I talk to business owners they are more than worried about the future—they’re afraid,” Abboud said. “They are afraid because of the rate of inflation, out of control health care costs, out of control energy costs, and the lack of a fair trade policy which limits their access to global markets.”

Abboud put forth six proposals to help small businesses prosper in America’s already struggling economy:

1. Allow small businesses to pool their resources and buy health insurance as a group. This will lower the cost of health care for business owners and help them attract more skilled workers who see the availability of health care as a deciding factor when looking for employment. This will serve as a stop-gap measure until a larger package of complete health care reform is in place which eliminates the insurance problem.
2. Streamline the federal grant application process and make grants more available. Abboud proposes to bring the process completely online, eliminating needless paperwork and the high cost of applications, creating a system for each business owner to monitor the progress of their application. The legislation would also include a simple set of criteria that must be met for small businesses to be considered for these grants.

3. Invest in renewable energy and green jobs. Over the past 12 months the renewable energy industry has become one of the fastest growing sectors of the economy. Providing tax incentives, grant programs and other federal support for this industry will create jobs, move America toward energy independence and help safeguard our environment.

4. Streamline federal tax code while providing tax incentives for small businesses. Reducing the complexity of federal taxes will help new business owners feel confident in a venture that is otherwise risky. Reducing the complexity of taxes will also allow small business owners to focus less on complying with federal guidelines and more on building their business. Expanding existing tax credits for small businesses and creating new incentives is critical for the success of small businesses. A Small Business Administration study found that 1 in 3 businesses fail inside of two years.

5. Open more government contracts for competitive bidding. In 2007, the federal government issued \$122 billion worth of government contracts that were not openly bid upon, including \$44 million of no-bid contracts in the 16th District (USAspending.gov).

6. Develop more small business 'incubator' facilities. Incubator facilities are an ideal environment for start-up businesses. They provide office space, equipment, tech support, shipping and receiving capabilities, conference rooms, labs and other amenities that would otherwise cost start-up businesses thousand upon thousands of dollars to install themselves. Currently, at the University of Illinois in Urbana-Champaign, there is a 43,000 sq. ft. facility that has already helped more than 50 start-up companies in Illinois.

Abboud added that Congress must help small business compete for grants and government contracts, and said that the federal government needs to end its policy of big corporate welfare and focus more on helping the business owners who employ more than half of the American workforce.

"Don Manzullo and Congress have been ignoring the small business owner so giant corporations can squeeze out a little more profit," Abboud said. "I am tired of seeing companies like Exxon and Halliburton get all kinds of government help, patent protection, and tax breaks to do business overseas while we in America are left on our own. The future of the American economy is bound to these brave business owners who risk it all just to make a living. These folks are not multi-millionaires, they are hard working people. It is our responsibility to protect their interest and encourage their enterprise – that is what builds America."