

Miller: Retaining U.S. Leadership in Innovation

Rep. George Miller (D-Calif.) delivered the Democratic response to President Bush's weekly radio address on Dec. 3, 2005:

I would like to talk to you today about the urgent need for America to retain its world leadership in innovative ideas and new technologies that will fuel our economy and create good jobs here at home.

You know, it's not easy being number one—at anything. It takes a sustained commitment, resources, and talent. It also takes leadership. More than 40 years ago, President John F. Kennedy said America would be number one, when he committed our nation to be first in sending a man to the Moon.

At that time, he said, "The vows of this nation can only be fulfilled if we are first, and therefore, we intend to be first." He went on to say that, "our leadership in science and in industry, our hopes for peace and security, our obligations to our selves as well as others, all require us to make this effort."

President Kennedy knew it was about more than putting a man on the Moon. It was about leadership and the vision to invest in the best of America. As a result, America created the most powerful public/private partnership in the history



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of the world. A partnership of businesses, universities, and government that worked hand in hand to create the greatest advancements in science, health, technology, and American prosperity in our history.

But America's leadership is being challenged today like never before. China, India, Korea, and others are rapidly investing in education, research, science, and technology, because they recognize that their economic success depends upon it. They have made innovation their priority.

Korea—with one-sixth the population—graduates almost the same number of engineers as the United States. China graduates almost four times as many. The United States ranks 16th in the penetration of broadband Internet technology. American 12th graders in international comparisons score at the bottom in math and science.

As a result, America has no choice. America must maintain its world leadership in innovation. If we do, we can continue to make enormous strides in health care, education, energy independence, and breakthrough technologies. But this will only happen if we are committed to leading. This is why we have laid down this challenge to the Congress and the President to make innovation, science, and technology once again America's top priority for economic growth and job creation.

Democrats in Congress believe that, working together, America can do better. We propose an "Innovation Agenda: A Commitment to Competitiveness To Keep America #1."

To retain its global innovation leadership, America must: graduate 100,000 new scientists, engineers, and mathematicians in the next four years; double funding for overall basic research and development; make the miracle of broadband Internet technology affordable and accessible to all Americans within five years; achieve real energy independence within ten years; and support entrepreneurial small businesses.

Our agenda will require the spirit and dedication to being number one that led to previous innovations, such as splitting the atom, the space program, the development of the Internet, and the human genome project. Good old American ingenuity can never die—we all know that. But it must be unleashed again.

Democrats believe that only by making a renewed and sustained commitment to innovation will our nation be able to maintain its global economic leadership, protect our national security, and enjoy prosperity at home with good American jobs.

A commitment to innovation should not be a partisan issue, but the President and the Republican Congress are failing to lead. And our competitors are gaining. That is why Democrats have laid down this challenge and look forward to working together to make America stronger. We hope that you will join us.

You can learn more about our innovation agenda on the web at: HouseDemocrats.gov.