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Pelosi: Unveils Innovation Agenda, Part of Vision for a Stronger America

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Washington, D.C. – House Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi unveiled the House Democrats' new "Innovation Agenda: A Commitment to Competitiveness to Keep America #1" in a speech at the National Press Club this morning. Below are Pelosi's remarks, followed by the Innovation Agenda:

"It is great to be back at the National Press Club, especially to present our Innovation Agenda: a Commitment to Competitiveness to Keep America Number One.

"The United States owes its very existence to entrepreneurial ideas. Our Founders had confidence that they were part of change in the world, and they had great faith in the future. That confidence and their faith in the future are reflected on the Great Seal of the United States, where they included these words in Latin: 'novus ordo seclorum' – 'A new order for the centuries.'

"Imagine their vision. In establishing that new order, our founders broadened our horizons, expanded our country, and imagined a better world. They also recognized that it is the responsibility of each generation to make America a better place for the next -- for our 'posterity'.

"It was in that tradition, and with the same confidence, imagination, and faith in the future, that President Kennedy challenged our nation to set our sights even higher than before. As he said in committing our nation to send a man to the moon, 'The vows of this nation can only be fulfilled if we are first, and therefore, we intend to be first. 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.'

"In answering that call to leadership in science and industry, America built the world's most vibrant economy and leads the world in scientific discovery and innovation. World economic and innovative leadership have continually been defined by American genius. Every advance once thought impossible has been achieved by Americans: splitting the atom, landing a man on the moon, mapping the human genome, and transmitting information around the world in an instant. Each of these discoveries and inventions launched new industries, created good jobs, and triggered even further innovation.

"We promoted an entrepreneurial culture, creating the most powerful public private partnership that the world had ever seen by investing in long-term, high-risk ideas. All of these factors made America the breeding ground for the innovations and inventions that increased our prosperity, enhanced our lives, and protected and advanced our freedoms. That dynamic and virtuous cycle of innovation is what secured our status as world leader, and that status has remained unchallenged – until now.

The Challenge

“Today, the world has changed dramatically – in ways that pose unprecedented challenges to our economic well-being. The underdeveloped countries of yesterday can become the formidable competitors of tomorrow... or even today. Those countries are following what has been the United States’ blueprint for decades, and which resulted in our pre-eminence.

“As others have copied our blueprint, we have departed from it. They are investing heavily in improving their educational systems, and creating world-class universities, particularly in science and technology. We have fewer students studying math and science, and fewer qualified teachers of math and science than we need. We will graduate 70,000 engineers this year. India will graduate 350,000 engineers, while China will graduate 600,000.

“They are making a commitment to long-term research and development. We are allowing that commitment to falter. Our federal support of basic research peaked in 1987, and has been flat or falling ever since. They are utilizing cutting-edge technologies to propel themselves forward. South Korea is an incubator for new innovation and leads the world in broadband penetration. We are now 16th in the world in broadband penetration. Even if the United States were following our blueprint for success, we would still face these challenges from abroad. But we aren’t, and that only compounds the problem.

“Democrats believe that together, America can do better. That is why, over the past several months, we’ve sought out the best possible thinking on how to secure America’s place as the world leader in innovation. We went outside of Washington, and met with leaders and CEOs from many fields: academia, venture capital, and entrepreneurs from the high-tech, biotech, and telecommunications sectors who are creating the jobs of tomorrow.

“We held forums with these leaders in Silicon Valley, Washington state, Chicago, Boston, Northern New Jersey, North Carolina’s Research Triangle, and we will hold more. Many of my colleagues who hosted these sessions are here today, and I want to acknowledge and thank them. Representatives George Miller, Anna Eshoo, Zoe Lofgren, Bart Gordon, David Price, Jan Schakowsky, Jay Inslee, Rush Holt, Mike Honda, Michael Capuano, and John Larson.

“In each of these forums, my colleagues and I were invigorated by the freshness of the participants’ thinking, and the depth of their commitment to the future. They took pride in the amazing history, power, and creativity of America’s economic model, and the inventiveness of the private sector. Many credited much of their success to public investment in education, infrastructure, university research, and institutions like the National Institutes of Health, the National Science Foundation, and DARPA. But they warned that the commitment of the public sector has not kept pace with America’s challenges in the global economy.

The Innovation Agenda

“Today, Democrats challenge Congress and the country to renew our commitment to the public-private partnerships that will secure America’s continued leadership in innovation, and unleash the next generation of discovery, invention, and growth. In addition to laying down this challenge, we’re also laying out a series of specific goals, proposals, and timelines that, taken together, chart a clear path to a new era of American leadership and prosperity. This is our innovation agenda – our commitment to competitiveness to keep America number one.

“First, we recognize that in a globalized, knowledge-based economy, America’s greatest resource for innovation and economic growth resides within America’s classrooms. To create a new generation of innovators, our agenda calls for a qualified teacher in every math and science K-12 classroom and we issue a ‘call to action’ to engineers and scientists to join the ranks of America’s teachers. We will add 100,000 new scientists, mathematicians, and engineers to America’s workforce in the next four years by providing scholarships, other financial assistance, and private sector opportunities to college students to achieve this goal.

“Second, we recognize that independent scientific research provides the foundation for innovation and future technologies. Our agenda will double federal funding for basic research and development in the physical sciences, and promote the public-private partnerships that will translate new ideas into marketable technologies. For example, grants from the National Science Foundation have funded breakthroughs in everything from the Internet, to fiber optics, to nanotechnology. We commit to doubling this investment. In addition, we will create research “centers of excellence” across the country, and modernize and make permanent the R&D tax credit. These investments will allow us to pursue the long-term, trailblazing research that gives rise to new advances, spawns new industries, and creates good jobs.

“Third, we recognize that the nationwide deployment of high speed, always-on broadband and Internet and mobile communications will fuel the development of millions of new jobs IN the United States. Our agenda guarantees that every American will have affordable access to broadband within five years. Universal broadband will propel advanced Internet applications, such as distance learning, health IT, video-on-demand, and Voice over IP. Universal broadband – whether it’s delivered by Wi-Fi or WiMAX, or hard line -- will put all Americans, no matter where they live, no more than a keystroke or a mouse click away from the jobs and opportunity that broadband both creates and supports. As one young technology leader told us in our meeting – ‘If you think you’ve seen what broadband can do, you ain’t seen nothing yet.’

“Fourth, we recognize that only innovation and technology can lead America to energy independence. We should be spending America’s energy dollars in the Midwest, not in the Middle East. It is vital to both our economic future and our national security that we develop clean, sustainable energy alternatives, such as bio-based fuels, as well as new engine technologies for flex-fuel, hybrid, and bio-diesel cars and trucks. To accelerate this work, we propose a new initiative within the Department of Energy, modeled after DARPA, that develops high-risk, high-reward, revolutionary energy technologies.

“Our goal is energy independence, and we intend to achieve it within ten years.

“Fifth, Democrats recognize the need to create a competitive small business environment for innovation. The evolution of an idea to a small business, and then ultimately to an entrepreneurial success, has been the spark for the technological revolution in our country and will be the key to continued job growth in the future. Therefore, our agenda calls for affordable health insurance, small business financial support and technical assistance, and reduced regulation. Essential to our pre-eminence is the protection of intellectual property. Our agenda commits to protecting the intellectual property of American innovators worldwide.

“These commitments, taken together, represent a Democratic decision in favor of the future.

“There will be those who say that we can’t afford to make these investments – in education, in research, in broadband, in energy independence, and in small business success. Democrats believe we can’t afford not to make them. We have no choice. These are critical priorities for our nation. We intend to submit them to the rigors of pay-as-you-go budgeting, so they will not add to the deficit, but instead will grow our economy.

“We know that America’s world leadership will be secured by those who operate on the frontier of knowledge discovery. From the beginning of our nation, that frontier has been aggressively expanded by America’s young people, who are not wedded to old ways of thinking, or daunted by the encumbrances of the past or present. For example, when I suggested to Google co-founder Larry Page that one of our goals in this agenda was going to be universal broadband in ten years, he said, ‘Ten? Why not two?’

“You’ll see that our agenda sets within five years as that goal. But the energy, imagination, and I say with admiration disruptive, thinking of America’s young people, is propelling us into the future.

Together, America Can Do Better

“Our innovation agenda is a challenge to the country and the Congress to drive those forces for change. Our innovation agenda is part of our vision for a stronger America. It is aimed at our common future. It is our commitment to America. And it is an agenda that reflects our most basic conviction that working together, for the common good, there is no challenge too great for the American people.

“Because of the spirit, optimism, and ingenuity, of the American people, Democrats believe that together, America can do better. This is our obligation to the future. This is our Democratic commitment.

“In the words of President Kennedy – ‘We intend to be first.’”

The Innovation Agenda

A commitment to Competitiveness to Keep America #1

The talent, intellect, and entrepreneurial spirit of the American people have made this nation the leader in economic and technological advancements. House Democrats believe American leadership is fueled by national investments in an educated and skilled workforce, groundbreaking federal research and development by public and private sectors, and a steadfast commitment to being the most competitive and innovative nation in the world.

America's global leadership in technological advancement and innovation is being seriously challenged by other countries. The warning signs could not be clearer. The rest of the world is increasing its capacity, its investments, and its will to catch up with us. We cannot ignore this challenge. Americans again must innovate in order to create new thriving industries that will produce millions of good jobs here at home and a better future for our children.

We must make the decision now to ensure that America remains the world leader. Working with leaders from the high-technology, venture capital, academic, biotech and telecommunications sectors, we have identified and are committed to priorities that will guarantee our national security and prosperity, expand markets for American products, and assert economic leadership throughout the world. Together, America can do better.

House Democrats are proud to present a bold INNOVATION AGENDA: A COMMITMENT TO COMPETITIVENESS TO KEEP AMERICA #1 to:

- Create an educated, skilled workforce in the vital areas of science, math, engineering, and information technology;
- Invest in a sustained federal research and development initiative that promotes public-private partnerships;
- Guarantee affordable access to broadband technology for all Americans;
- Achieve energy independence in 10 years by developing emerging technologies for clean and sustainable alternatives that will strengthen national security and protect the environment; and,
- Provide small businesses with the tools to encourage entrepreneurial innovation and job creation.

The future prosperity and competitiveness of America demand that we initiate this sustained financial and intellectual investment in innovation. We must also ensure that our children and grandchildren are not burdened by failed policies that have exploded the national debt. That is why House Democrats will submit these priorities to the rigors of “pay-as-you-go” budgeting to ensure that new spending or tax cuts do not add to the deficit.

House Democrats believe the American people have always excelled at leading the world. With this bold agenda, our nation will continue to be the world leader in education, innovation, and economic growth.

A New Generation of Innovators

America's greatest resource for innovation resides within classrooms across the country. We must give our students more opportunities to be highly-trained in math, science, and technology so they can turn ideas into innovations. Future innovators must reflect the diversity of our country, and we must provide opportunities for every qualified student, including minorities and women. Democrats will create a new generation of scientists, engineers, and mathematicians and will ensure that today's students get the job skills they need at all levels of learning.

To achieve this goal, Democrats will:

- Educate 100,000 new scientists, engineers, and mathematicians in the next four years by proposing a new initiative, working with states, businesses, and universities, to provide scholarships to qualified students who commit to working in the fields of innovation.
- Place a highly qualified teacher in every math and science K-12 classroom by offering upfront tuition assistance to talented undergraduates and by paying competitive salaries to established teachers working in the fields of math and science; institute a “call to action” to professional engineers and scientists, including those who have

retired, to join the ranks of our nation's teachers.

- Create a special visa for the best and brightest international doctoral and postdoctoral scholars in science, technology, engineering and mathematics.
- Make college tuition tax-deductible for students studying math, science, technology, and engineering.

A Sustained Commitment to Research and Development

Independent scientific research provides the foundation for innovation and future technologies. But U.S. federal funding for research and development has declined steadily over the last decade, and sound science has been compromised by political interference. We can do better. Over the next five years, Democrats will double the federal commitment to research aimed at developing the next generation of sound scientific breakthroughs, and we will promote the public-private partnerships necessary to translate these new ideas into marketable technologies.

To achieve this goal, Democrats will:

- Double overall funding for the National Science Foundation, basic research in the physical sciences across all agencies, and collaborative research partnerships; restore the basic, long-term research agenda at the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) to conduct long-range, high-risk, and high-reward research.
- Create regional Centers of Excellence for basic research that will attract the best minds and top researchers to develop far-reaching technological innovations and new industries, and modernize existing federal and academic research facilities.
- Modernize and permanently extend a globally competitive R&D tax credit to increase domestic investment, create more U.S. jobs, and allow companies to pursue long-term projects with the certainty that the credit will not expire.

Affordable Broadband Access for Every American Within Five Years

Nationwide deployment of high speed, always-on broadband Internet and mobile communications will fuel the development of millions of new jobs in the United States. Just as railroads and highways did in the past, broadband and mobile communications will dramatically increase the productivity and efficiency of our economy in the future. In education, broadband will provide greater access to information, expanded curriculum, and real-time collaboration across borders and boundaries. In health care, broadband will enable advanced electronic health technology to improve patient care and vastly reduce costs. In communications, broadband will make the convergence of information, media, and telecommunications a reality, and services such as Voice over IP and video on demand will be pervasive. Democrats will ensure that the United States has the world's most advanced telecommunications infrastructure to bridge the digital divide so that every American has access to affordable broadband Internet service and communications technology.

To achieve this goal, Democrats will:

- Implement a national broadband policy that doubles federal funding to promote broadband for all Americans, especially in rural and underserved communities; create new avenues of Internet access including wireless broadband technologies, broadband over power lines, and affordable community-based options.
- Ensure the continued growth of Internet-based services and provide a stable regulatory framework to attract investment by existing providers and new entrants.
- Enact a broadband tax credit for telecommunications companies that deploy broadband in rural and underserved parts of America to ensure that every region of the country benefits from our innovation investments.

Energy Independence in 10 Years

America will achieve energy independence from Middle East oil in the next 10 years by developing emerging technologies that work in synergy with the existing energy infrastructure. A sustained investment in research and development is crucial to creating cutting-edge technologies that allow us to develop clean, sustainable energy alternatives and capitalize on America's vast renewable natural resources.

To achieve this goal, Democrats will:

- Substantially reduce the use of petroleum based fuels by rapidly expanding production and distribution of synthetic and bio-based fuels, such as ethanol derived from cellulosic sources, and by deploying new engine technologies for fuel-flexible, hybrid, plug-in hybrid and biodiesel vehicles.
- Create a new DARPA-like initiative within the Department of Energy to provide seed money for fundamental research needed to develop high-risk, high-reward technologies and build markets for the next generation of revolutionary energy technologies, such as those emerging from biotechnology, nanotechnology, solar, and fuel-cell research.

A Competitive Small Business Environment for Innovation

Small businesses are the catalysts for technological innovation. The evolution from idea to marketable product, guided by a successful small business plan, has led to entrepreneurial successes that have fueled our technological revolution and will be the key to continued job growth in the future. Yet small businesses face significant hurdles, both regulatory and market-based, that thwart the effort to transform ideas into jobs. Removing these hurdles is a key component of this Innovation Agenda.

To achieve this goal, Democrats will:

- Bridge the “valley of death” that destroys innovative ideas before they become marketable products due to lack of financing and technical support by doubling funding for the Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) and the Advanced Technology Program (ATP), modernizing the Small Business Innovation Research Program (SBIR), and fully funding SBA 7(a) loans to ensure that American small businesses have the resources and technical assistance they need to successfully innovate.
- Reward risk-taking and entrepreneurship by promoting broad-based stock options for rank-and-file employees.
- Protect the intellectual property of American innovators worldwide, strengthen the patent system, and end the diversion of patent fees.
- Require specifically-tailored guidelines for small public companies to ensure Sarbanes-Oxley requirements are not overly burdensome.
- Provide universal, affordable access to health insurance, beginning with a 50 percent tax credit and multi-insurer pools to help small businesses provide affordable and comprehensive health care coverage for their employees.

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