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Letter from the Congresswoman

Dear Friends,

The holiday season has arrived! With it comes the reminder of not only the gifts we seek but the gifts we have: family and friends that are the true richness of life. In the coming weeks, I hope you'll spend plenty of quality time with those you hold near and dear.

This time of year is difficult for many in our community who are struggling in an economy that has yet to fully rebound. Many families are having trouble meeting their basic needs for food, clothing and shelter. I am working hard in Congress to help ease the economic pressures families feel and to protect vital government programs, such as the SNAP food stamp program, that are important safety nets for families working to get back on their feet. There are many wonderful organizations in our community that will be working to help these families this season. Remember that charity begins at home. You often don't have to travel too far outside of your own neighborhood to find a person that could use a little kindness.

Shopping local for your end of year purchases and patronizing the many great little shops and boutiques in the 2nd District helps bring money back into the community. These small businesses, run by our friends and neighbors, are the backbone of our local economy and a driving force in creating local jobs. Spending

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District Resources

- [Small Business](#)
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- [Employment Support and Resource Guide](#)

Sponsored Legislation

H.R. 3327: Extends the Work Opportunity Tax Credit that expires December 31, 2013 for a period of 5 years, for businesses that

your money locally is a great way to find a unique gift while giving a little something back to your community.

It is an honor and a privilege to represent the 2nd District of Illinois. I look forward to continuing to work with you in the coming year to make the 2nd District an even better place to live and work.

I wish you the very best of the holiday season and a happy, healthy and prosperous new year,



Robin L. Kelly
Member of Congress

Small Business Workshop

In early November, I hosted a small business workshop to help connect entrepreneurs with the resources they need to start or expand their businesses. I brought in top experts from across the area to offer their advice to the capacity crowd. The turnout shows a renewed entrepreneurial spirit in our district.

At the workshop, entrepreneurs learned how to obtain capital and develop a solid business plan, among other topics. Our experts offered the latest information on micro-lending and other loans, grants, and crowd funding. In addition, participants learned about marketing through social media, websites, blogs, and advertisements. And representatives from the State of Illinois offered helpful tips on how to secure state and federal contracts.

I plan to host additional workshops, so please continue to visit my website at <http://www.robinkelly.house.gov> for the latest information. To download my Small

hire Veterans.

H.R. 3328: Extends the Work Opportunity Tax Credit that expires December 31, 2013, for businesses that hire qualified ex-felons, summer youth employee's, and SNAP benefits recipients.

Co-Sponsored Legislation

H.R. 3125: To authorize the Secretary of the Air Force to make competitive grants to support research and development, education, and training to produce a bio-based aviation fuel for use by the Air Force and to provide an initial infusion of funds for the grant program.

H.R. 3535: To amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to authorize new empowerment zone designations for urban areas with high unemployment and high foreclosure rates.

Office Contacts

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Grants:

Business guidebook of resources for small business owners and entrepreneurs, visit <http://robinkelly.house.gov/resources/constituent-service-guidebooks> .



Congresswoman Kelly speaking at the Small Business Workshop

Second District Economic Development Tour

In November, I conducted my 2nd District Economic Development Tour. Making stops in Chicago, Kankakee and throughout the South Suburbs, I heard ideas from business owners on how I can support business growth and job creation in the district. I want to highlight a few of the businesses I visited on my first Economic Development Tour:

- **Imperial Zinc**, a family owned Chicago business, is the United States' largest producer of zinc alloy. For many years, the company has offered second-chance employment to ex-offenders. According to company president Mark Spellman, the ex-offenders have turned out to be the best workers.

During my visit, I learned the company's major concern is lack of reliable internet service – which is problem throughout the South Side of Chicago. I'm currently looking for ways to help improve internet access to facilitate Imperial Zinc's expansion and attract new businesses to the area.

- **Landaaur** in Glenwood produces millions of radiation monitoring devices worn by medical

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<http://robinkelly.house.gov/>

employees, nuclear power plant operators and military personnel. The company recently developed a wristwatch-like product used by soldiers to detect radiation in the combat fields. Landaur is eager to expand and modernize its plants and I will do whatever I can to support this initiative and protect our troops.

- **Nucor Steel** in Kankakee produces rebar (reinforcing bar) steel rounds, flats, and angles. Nucor is a Fortune 300 company and one of the largest steel producing companies in the world, providing a necessary resource to a variety of industries. While visiting we discussed the importance of improving our infrastructure to create jobs update the many overdue infrastructure sites across the country.

- **CSX** in Riverdale is the largest freight railroad transportation company east of the Mississippi. One in five of CSX's employees are veterans and the company has been recognized by GI Jobs as one of the top 10 places in the nation for veterans to work. While touring their facility I learned about many of their local projects and programs they have initiated to hire local and improve the community.

My primary goal as a Member of Congress is to provide more opportunities for residents and businesses. The economic development tour was part of my comprehensive plan to promote economic growth and job creation in the 2nd District.

I encourage you to regularly check www.robinkelly.house.gov to learn about economic development initiatives and future projects that may benefit you or your neighborhood.



Congresswoman Kelly visiting Landaaur and learning about docimeters.

Veterans Day in the Second District

On November 11th, we celebrated Veterans Day by honoring the brave men and women who served in defense of our great nation. Their sacrifice makes our freedoms possible so I spent much of that weekend visiting with veterans across the district to thank them for their service. I visited the Pullman War Monument, Thornton Township Veterans Day Benefit Fair, and the American Legion in Hazel Crest. I also attended the Lansing Veterans Memorial Honor guard event, honoring our women veterans. The Second District has a proud history of service. Talking with veteran constituents is one of the most rewarding parts of my job and I relish the opportunity to hear their stories and learn how I can best serve them.

To help ensure that veterans and recently returned service members have as easy a transition into civilian life as possible, my office has put together a veterans guidebook. In it, you will find information on everything from veteran benefits to education, housing, and female service member resources. To download my Veterans Guidebook, visit <http://robinkelly.house.gov/resources/constituent-service-guidebooks>.

Cleaning Up Pet Coke Mountains

Pet coke—short for petroleum coke—is a black, sandy byproduct of a refinery in Whiting, Indiana. On windy days, clouds of black sand can be seen blowing from the mounds into surrounding neighborhoods, coating homes and cars. Pet Coke may have the potential to cause respiratory issues for residents.

I recently co-sponsored a bill directing the federal government to conduct a comprehensive study on the health and environmental impacts of pet coke. I also sent a letter to the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency expressing my concerns with a permit application submitted by KCBX to expand its pet coke operation. The IEPA denied the permit on November 19. Additionally, the U.S. EPA ordered the two pet coke storage facilities to install nine air quality monitors in nearby neighborhoods.

I want to thank local, state and federal officials for acting quickly to address the pet coke issue. I will continue working with them to limit the amount of pet coke being stored by KCBX and another company, Beemsterboer, until more is learned about the possible health and environmental impacts. And I'm happy to report that, in recent weeks, some of the pet coke has been removed.

I believe the health and safety of the community must always come first and will continue to work to protect residents from the potential hazards presented by pet coke.

12 Days of District

For a little holiday fun, I'm hosting a virtual district scavenger hunt. From December 17th through December 28th, I will post on my official Facebook and Twitter accounts a picture and clue of a district landmark. To participate, take a picture of yourself at

the same location and post it on either Facebook or Twitter using the hashtag #12DoD. A fun family activity, see if you can find them all!

Remember to like my Facebook page and follow me on Twitter to keep up with the scavenger hunt as well as my office's programs and initiatives.

News You Can Use: Preparing Your Home for Winter Weather

- 1. Seal drafty windows and doors:** Spending a few dollars on weatherizing doors and windows will help you save on energy costs and is a wise investment to keep the cold out and heat in.
- 2. Change your air filter:** Replace your air filter every 30-60 days to make sure warm air has a clean path from the furnace to your vents.
- 3. Lower your water heater temperature:** Set your water heater's temperature to between 120° and 125° to save money.
- 4. Keep vents clear:** Move furniture and rugs away from vents so warm air can circulate freely.
- 5. Store window unit air conditioners:** Leaving in-window units will allow cool drafts to come inside.
- 6. Set your thermostat:** If you can, program your thermostat to lower the temperature when you are not going to be home for 8 hours or more.
- 7. Keep fireplace damper closed:** When you are not using it, make sure your fireplace is closed to keep cold air from leaking into your home.
- 8. Insulate your attic and basement:** Having uninsulated attics and basements makes it more difficult to keep your home warm.
- 9. Keep shades closed at night:** Shades help insulate windows and help keep your home warm.
- 10. Open sun-facing shades:** When you open shades that face the sun, you invite in natural heat that helps lower costs.

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