



Maryland Sixth Congressional District Jobs Plan

I grew up on a family farm working long hours and struggling to make ends meet. My introduction to business was balancing the checkbook on a farm that sometimes couldn't even make payroll. While my family went on to lose the farm to the bank, we learned some important lessons that served me well in business and it was an invaluable experience.

After losing the farm I started a small beer store while I was in grad school to help support my family. So I understand the importance of small business, which creates 2 out of every 3 jobs, because I started with one store where I worked open to close 7 days a week, at the cash register, stocking the shelves, and paying the bills. It was a struggle to make ends meet but with hard work we were able to grow the business from one store to two, then to three. Over 20 years later that one beer store is still the one I'm most proud of.

Along the way the most important lesson I learned was that my employees were crucial to success. With the help of an amazing team we now have a company that's in communities in 22 states across the country and employs 6,000 people, including more than 650 in Montgomery County.

Today those 6,000 employees are still the key to our success. That's why we pay higher wages and benefits than our competitors. In most retail, 25% of employees are full-time and receive benefits while 75% are part-time and do not. In my business, it's the opposite. 75% of our employees are full-time and get full benefits, which include retirement, PTO, and medical insurance. We also pay for our employees to earn their GEDs and have a pilot program with the University of Maryland that offers a four-year college degree paid for by the company.

Creating good-paying jobs in Maryland's Sixth District will be a top priority of mine and our district is a great place to start and grow a business – we just need government to make the right investments. Here's what I propose.

Tax Incentives and Incubators

Small businesses are great vehicles for hiring talent, [with more than half of all workers in the United States being employed by small businesses](#). We should create a welcoming environment for small businesses because they create good, well-paying jobs.

Fairer tax incentives targeted toward small businesses -- rather than just handouts to the largest corporations -- can help bring new jobs to the district. Last year a biotech startup called [Ibex Bio Sciences opened in Cumberland](#) in part because of Maryland's Biotechnology Investment Incentive Tax Credit. In Congress, I'll support federal incentives like this for businesses to locate in less traditional areas.

We also need to invest in incubators and business development programs. [ROOT in Frederick County is a great example](#). ROOT is centered around long-term growth and getting businesses to develop roots in Frederick County. This program also incentivizes companies to stay in Frederick, building a strong business climate that will create jobs and generate revenues for the county down the road.

Skills Training and Apprenticeships

We need to make sure we create and invest in a pipeline of talent. The United States has a staggering [6.3 million jobs that are unfilled](#) because businesses can't find workers with the right skills. Many of these jobs don't require a four-year college degree but do require more than a high school diploma. We need to invest in students who choose not to pursue a four-year degree.

We also need to expand skilled trade and apprenticeship opportunities for all. Studies have found that for [every \\$1 invested in apprenticeship programs, employers can get back up to \\$1.47](#) in the long-term. We need to do more so students can be ready for the job market upon graduation, and in many cases that starts by expanding support for apprenticeship and skilled trade programs.

I also support free community college. Garrett County has had free community college for years, and their program has helped spur economic growth in the county. There's no reason we can't make this available across the country.

Invest in Research

There are several federal research centers in our area that do groundbreaking research to benefit the American people. One of them is the National Institutes of Health (NIH). I propose doubling the budget of the NIH. Even before Trump was President, NIH was drastically underfunded. [Multiple studies](#) have found that every dollar we invest into NIH has an exponential return that bolsters our economy and more than pays for itself in the long run. And these investments at NIH will create thousands of good paying jobs right here in Montgomery County.

Doubling NIH funding will also address serious issues like Dementia which is a serious problem in our country. It costs us too many lives and puts a serious strain on our healthcare system. Currently, [the nation spends \\$259 billion per year caring for people with dementia and that cost could rise to \\$1.1 trillion by 2050. Yet the NIH only spends \\$480 million per year researching dementia.](#)

Fort Detrick is another great research center. Many think of Fort Detrick as just a military installation. But of the 9,100 employees there, only 300 of them work directly for the army. Most are in the biodefense sector doing vital research that not only help our national security but has also yielded great advances in research into cancer and other diseases.

Unfortunately, Fort Detrick is constantly threatened by politicians who don't see the long-term benefits of these programs. Most recently, the Trump Administration proposed gutting the National Biodefense Analysis and Countermeasures Center (NBACC) at Fort Detrick, which helps the FBI investigate bioterrorism cases.

Fortunately, Congressman Delaney was able to restore the NBACC's funding. By maintaining this funding, we not only keep these important programs up and running, but we also make a long-term investment in the people of Frederick. These programs attract highly skilled and valuable talent to the area. We want to make sure we keep these individuals in Frederick and create an economic environment that incentivizes them to stay.

Expand Broadband Access

Too many areas in Allegany and Garrett Counties still don't have reliable broadband access. In our new information economy, broadband is a necessity, not a luxury. Businesses often consider broadband a prerequisite to move into an area. In addition, many people are now telecommuting, and people who live in Western Maryland shouldn't be hampered with inadequate services that keep them from accessing the same jobs as others throughout our state.

Growing up on a struggling family farm, I've seen firsthand how politicians and corporations leave rural America behind. In Congress, I will fight for federal grants to help defray the cost of developing broadband infrastructure.

Fix our Infrastructure

Infrastructure is vital for healthy economic growth in our district. Medium and large employers only bring jobs to communities with strong infrastructure: good roads, modern utilities, and safe power grids. If we don't make these investments now, we cannot expect to get companies to come here.

We need an infrastructure bank so that states and municipalities can fund the projects and repairs they need. I support Congressman Delaney's plan to fund the infrastructure bank by encouraging corporations to return the \$2 trillion held in offshore accounts to the U.S. Our district has three major projects, in particular, that need this funding:

- **I-81** - It's long past time to widen I-81 from four lanes to six. More highway lanes are crucial to the economy of Washington County, with I-81 [carrying more than 19,400 trucks per day](#). I will work with our congressional delegation and members on both sides of the aisle to secure a federal FASTLANE grant for this vital project.
- **I-270** - We need to fix I-270 with new express lanes from the American Legion Bridge all the way through Frederick, and regional express-bus service using those new dedicated lanes. The federal government needs to step up and provide some of the funds. Montgomery County residents know all too well how much time they spend sitting in traffic. That's time that they can't be with their families and be involved in their kids' education. This is unacceptable.
- **WMATA** - It's no secret to anyone in Montgomery County that WMATA needs serious improvements. We need to address both the funding and the governance. [I support Congressman Delaney's bill](#) that will provide \$75 million in federal funds for WMATA, while requiring that qualified professionals be appointed to the Metro board of directors.