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U.S. Rep. Bobby L. Rush (D-IL) is proud to have introduced a bipartisan legislation today along with U.S. Rep. Chris Smith (D-NJ) titled, **The Increasing American Jobs through Greater Exports to Africa Act of 2012.** [[Download](#)
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The bill also aims to improve America's competitiveness throughout the continent by forcing better coordination between U.S. government agencies and departments, establishing comprehensive strategic goals, and marshaling private investments to improve U.S.-Africa business activities.

"This bill is the right bill to enact in these uniquely challenging times for the United States and its ability to generate further economic growth." Rep. Rush said. "The US has talked for too long about Africa as being the next trade and investment frontier. That strategy barely allows us to run in place. Now is the time for taking action in moving forward!"

"America businesses are facing serious competition in continental African markets. We now have a tremendous opportunity to build mutually beneficial policies that create jobs and economic growth on both continents. Sub-Saharan Africa, in particular comprises some of the fastest growing economies in the world. Over the next five years, 7 of the world's 10 fastest-growing economies will come from this region. In 2008, Africa's purchasing power reached \$860 billion with a projection to grow upwards of \$1.4 trillion in the next 10 years.

"For a long time, Africa was portrayed as a symbol of stagnation, war, dictatorship, poverty, and disease. Today, the African continent is experiencing a serious reawakening and revival. This legislation will change those misguided perceptions and foster a greater understanding among U.S. businesses and financial communities of the opportunities that exist in Africa. We need to think more strategically and innovatively as to how to encourage and support investments in trade with Africa – not just from a competitiveness perspective, but from job creation and development perspectives as well. "Rep Rush added that "this legislation, when taken together with H.R. 656 – the African Investment and Diaspora Act of 2011, which I introduced last year, will advance mutually beneficial trading activity between the US and Africa."

Others noted and recognized commentators on US-Africa trade and commercial relations immediately supported the introduction of Rep. Rush's legislation.

Stephen Hayes, the President and CEO, Corporate Council on Africa said that *"Africa has never been more important to the US economy than it is now. The opportunities in the African marketplace are only growing daily, and if the American private sector, working with our Government, does not take advantage of these opportunities jobs will be lost for American workers and manufacturers to those countries who do already understand the value of the American marketplace. The American product is highly respected throughout the fifty-four nations of Africa and we must be able to compete. To be able to compete we must have a far more active and greater presence throughout the continent."*

"There are several US government agencies with similar mandates to support US investment in Africa – OPIC, Ex-Im, Department of Commerce – but our experience on the ground in Africa suggests that a more harmonized, coherent approach is necessary to give US companies a leading edge. Africa is now widely recognized as one of the last true "frontier markets", and this bill will provide US companies with much-needed support to seize opportunities in these markets." Says Rosa Whitaker, President and CEO of the Whitaker Group, She served as the First Assistant Trade Representative on Africa.

According to Ms. Liesl Riddle, PhD, Associate Dean for MBA Programs and Associate Professor of International Business and International Affairs, School of Business, George Washington University,

"Diaspora investment catalyzed China and India into emerging market status. Today African diasporans in the United States are seeking ways to invest in Africa to further economic and social development across the Continent. Passage of this bill will provide many of the tools necessary to successfully channel the Diaspora's potential for development into Africa, while creating American jobs and opportunity in some of the fastest growing markets of the twenty-first century"

Harry C. Alford, President/CEO National Black Chamber of Commerce, Inc, said: *"This bill gets 100% support from the National Black Chamber of Commerce, Inc. Not only is it great with the opportunities it presents; it is overdue. We are playing "catch up in Africa and tools like this are just what we need. Also, there are more than 200 million people of African Descent (members of the African Diaspora) who are poised to interact with Africa via trade and investment. This bill, if enacted will encourage them to become more active."*

In closing, Rep Rush said, "My bill will help reduce non-trade barriers, encourage regional integration of African countries, increase U.S exports, and positively affect United States trade, export and labor initiatives. Furthermore, passage of this legislation will ensure that U.S. policy is contributing meaningfully to the positive transformation of Africa, enabling it to progress towards full integration into the twenty-first century world economy – not only as a supplier of raw materials and resources but as full participants in international supply and distribution chains."