



Opening Statement of Chairman Tom Rice
Subcommittee on Economic Growth, Tax and Capital Access
“American Competitiveness Worldwide: Impacts on Small Businesses and Entrepreneurs”
July 9, 2013

Good afternoon. Thank you all for being with us today. I call this hearing to order.

Today’s hearing covers a topic which I believe is of the utmost importance—restoring America’s competitiveness. A nation’s competitiveness is primarily based on its firms’ ability to compete across global markets, while at the same time raising the standard of living for all citizens. I was sent to Washington to work on solutions that will boost our economy and create jobs for all Americans, and restoring our competitiveness is necessary for achieving both.

To ensure competitiveness, America’s broad economic policy must focus on helping businesses increase long term productivity; this means promoting policies that give our firms the ability to be the best in the world, such as reducing onerous regulations. Fortunately, this afternoon, we have both companies to provide insight on what it takes to be competitive every day and Prof. Michael Porter; who has extensively studied this issue of competitiveness and has eight broad policy changes he believes will allow our nation to experience substantial economic growth.

It is important to note the impact these policies will have on small firms. For example, as a tax attorney, I know the challenges faced by small businesses in trying to figure out the nation’s complex tax code. The Committee on Small Business has previously held hearings on the burdens of this, and reforming the tax code will go a long way in helping America’s small businesses. However, a complex tax code is but one part of the burden. As we will hear today, a holistic approach is necessary to truly ensure that companies are able to be competitive. As we all know a diet is nothing without exercise, and while one will help, to be most successful you must do both; competitiveness is the same way. One is good, but to restore America’s competitive edge we must combine various factors until we have created an atmosphere that propels our businesses to the top.

Additionally, while Congress must work together at a federal level to create better policies, it is important to remember that businesses themselves can lead the way in their local communities. For example, throughout many parts of the United States, area employers are working with community colleges to develop curricula that would allow the companies to hire local students with requisite skills, such as advanced manufacturing. This sort of initiative is necessary, and I applaud those efforts. We need companies who are aware of challenges in their industry to, whenever possible, take steps to address those concerns.

Today's witnesses truly understand both the challenges and the conditions necessary to restore America's competitiveness, and I thank you all for being here and I look forward to your testimony. The road to reviving our country's competitive edge in an increasingly global economy will take hard work but it is work I am committed to. I now yield to Ranking Member Chu for her opening remarks.