

thank you for coming. David Dreier, chairman of the Rules Committee—David, thank you for being here.

David and I worked closely together to get a trade bill out of the House of Representatives. He knows what I know, that trade is good for creating jobs in the State of California. Fearful people, people who don't trust the ability of our entrepreneurs, build walls around America. Confident people tear them down, and I'm confident in the American spirit. I'm confident that the entrepreneurs of our country—Hispanic, Anglo, African American—compete with anybody, anyplace, anytime, and let's trade freely.

Congressman Calvert, Congressman Issa are with us as well. Thank you two for coming. And finally, Congressman Jerry Lewis is with us today.

I notice the people in the uniforms here applauding a little louder. They understand that Congressman Lewis plays an incredibly important role when it comes to appropriating monies for the United States military. There is no—he's been strong on the defense of America. I look forward to working with Jerry Lewis in the next budget cycle to make sure that the defense of this Nation is the number one priority of the budget of the United States.

I want to thank Rosario Marin, the Treasurer of the United States, for being here. It's nice to be back in your neighborhood, Rosario. I want to thank Hector Barreto, the Administrator of the SBA; Ruben Barrales, who works for me in the White House. Thank you for coming, Ruben.

I want to thank our host organizations, the Latin Business Association, the Ontario Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce of Orange County, and the Latino Coalition, for your sponsorship. One of the things that I am most proud of, of our Nation, is the number of Latinos who own their own business, the number of Latinos who really work hard to access the American Dream.

The growth of Latino-owned small businesses in California is astounding. It is amazing how many people now can say, "I am a proud business owner." To me, that is what America is all about, somebody who has a dream, somebody who works hard and can say to themselves and their community, "This is my business. This is something I own, and nobody can take it away from me."

And the job of Government is always to remember the importance of the small business and the entrepreneurial dream. The job of Government is not to try to create wealth. The job of Government is to create an environment in which people are willing to take risks to realize their dream. It's to educate people. It's to provide opportunity and then make the playing field as level as it is and see who can succeed or not in the great country called America.

This has been an amazing year for Laura and me. Some things occurred that we expected. Some things happened that we didn't expect. I'm going to talk about one thing we were able to anticipate and one we weren't.

First, I will tell you that nearly a year ago I hosted a group of business leaders to Austin, Texas, before I had become sworn in as the President. And leaders all around the country came and made it very clear that our economy was pretty darn slow, and I knew we needed to do something about it, and I'm going to talk about that in a second. So it was expected that there would be unemployment on the rise, expected that after a period of great prosperity, the economy would slow down. And we took some action that I'll describe here in a second.

Obviously, what was not expected was what took place on September the 11th, and we're doing something about that, as well. This great land of ours made a clear statement that we will not let terror stand, that those who inflicted damage on America would pay a severe price.