



**Opening Statement of Chairman Sam Graves  
House Committee on Small Business  
“A Job Creation Roadmap: How America’s Entrepreneurs  
Can Lead Our Economic Recovery”  
March 21, 2012**

Good afternoon. I call this hearing to order. I want to thank our distinguished panel of witnesses for being here today. You have taken time from your businesses and families, and we appreciate having the benefit of your testimony.

Today, we turn our attention to entrepreneurs, one of the most critical links in our economy. Entrepreneurs are the thinkers who can take an idea from a concept to fruition. They are the risk takers, bootstrappers and inventors we are depending on to create jobs and spur economic growth. Entrepreneurs represent what is great about America – opportunity, innovation and hard work.

It’s never easy to start a company, and in today’s economy, it’s an even greater challenge. The trend in entrepreneurship is up, but an entrepreneur’s ability to hire is down. The recession’s high unemployment rates may have encouraged people to start sole proprietorships, but there are many obstacles in the way of growing a company to create jobs.

One of our witnesses today, Heath Hall, and his business partner started their company in the middle of a recession. Friends and family members thought they were crazy, but they wanted to prove that a small business could succeed if it was founded by entrepreneurs with a good work ethic, a great product and people who believed in them. They wanted to prove that the free market is still the best path to success for entrepreneurs.

This afternoon, we will hear from witnesses who will discuss the current state of entrepreneurship and the risks, rewards and challenges of building a company. We look forward to your testimony.

I now yield to our Ranking Member for her opening statement.