



Working Families First: Senator-elect Jim Banks' Policy Vision for the 119th Congress

Last month's election gave the GOP a clear mandate: come January, congressional Republicans must develop, pass, and enact a legislative agenda that places working Americans and their families squarely at its center. Working hand in hand with President Trump, we will build an economy that creates opportunity for hardworking Americans, reject wokeness and anti-Americanism at every level of our society, and rebuild our defense-industrial base and refocus our military on winning wars.

I was honored when Hoosiers chose me on November 5 to be their next senator. When I get sworn in this January, here are the top priorities I'll be bringing to the table:

1. Fight for Working Families

Nobody has suffered more because of bad trade and economic policymaking than America's working and middle classes. Our policies should focus on doing right by them, especially those working in manufacturing, the trades, and other skilled fields that don't require a four-year degree. Republicans must not take their vote for granted. Whether it's on tax, trade, or investment here at home, I won't support policies that fail to center working American families and their interests. Instead, our party should focus on priorities like building out access to apprenticeships and technical training or expanding Pell grant opportunities to prepare for the workforce. By doing so, we can build up working American families, giving them the room they need to get a good job, form a family, and strengthen their community.

2. Strengthen American Industry

U.S. legislators must renew our commitment to American manufacturing and our defense-industrial base. Being able to make things is essential to protecting our national security, ensuring production capacity for peace- and wartime alike while creating good jobs. Republicans owe the American people a detailed strategy to incentivize domestic investment—especially in advanced manufacturing and other highly productive industries—and elevate the industrial base to the top tier of our national defense strategy. We need to restore our capacity to make ships, munitions, and other materiel in America. By boosting innovation and supporting sectors with high-growth potential, we will secure America's position at the forefront of global manufacturing.

3. Refocus the Pentagon on the Warfighter

As federal policymakers have allowed the defense-industrial base to wither, so too has the Department of Defense prioritized trendy progressive politics over the lethality and wellbeing of American service-members. Over the last four years, our top military brass has been more focused on DEI than it has recruitment, leaving us understaffed and unprepared to counter adversaries like China and Iran. We need to immediately remove divisive, leftwing politics from the Pentagon and refocus on merit, so we can return to identifying and rewarding excellence across the U.S. Armed Forces. With a unified government and President Trump at the helm, we'll begin this hard work and once again make America's military the envy of the world.

4. Restore Traditional Values and Stop Wokeness

Wokeness is a poison that has infiltrated America's largest corporations, universities, Hollywood, and beyond. Our nation was horrified last year when far-left radicals took over campus buildings nationwide to intimidate Jewish classmates and cheer on Hamas. We have seen cowardly scientists suppress studies showing the damage wrought by hormone blockers on children and partisan prosecutors dish out draconian prison sentences to peaceful, pro-life protesters. And we have been enraged as Antifa rioters knock down memorials to America's Founding Fathers, veterans, and other heroes in protest after protest. Back in power, the Republican Party will confront all this cultural rot head-on. We will stand up for traditional values, the sanctity of life, free speech, and pride in our history.

5. Put an End to the Border Crisis

A secure border means a secure America. Republicans must end the tide of illegal immigration and nonstop abuses of the Temporary Protected Status (TPS) system, which the Biden-Harris administration has used to send thousands of migrants to small towns across America. We will enforce the rule of law, protect American wages and jobs, and reform TPS to curtail its abuses. Republicans must make clear that we understand a strong, fair immigration policy is foundational to our prosperity and to the integrity of our nation.

6. Defend American Workers From China

China's 2001 entry into the World Trade Organization has been a catastrophe to America's working class. Since then, our manufacturing output has plummeted, with the nation shedding about 3 million jobs across the sector. Today, Beijing continues to exploit our openness, stealing our intellectual property and engaging in export dumping and other unfair trade practices that undercut American workers. Even worse, the Chinese Communist Party is actively poisoning hundreds of thousands of working-age Americans by exporting deadly fentanyl precursors to the Mexican cartels. Republicans must bring this to an end. We must build on President Trump's leadership on tariffs and trade remedies, take bold steps to protect our industries from predatory practices, strengthen U.S. manufacturing, and expand the export of American-made goods and commodities. We will level the playing field, giving our workers and businesses a fair shot to succeed.

7. Unleash U.S. Building Power

America is a frontier nation, one that shouldn't be held back by red tape that restrains our ability to build new roads, bridges, or other vital infrastructure. Smart regulatory reforms should be aimed at allowing us to make full use of our abundant natural resources and reforming our expensive and needlessly drawn-out federal permitting process. Republicans should prioritize slashing regulations so we can lower housing costs, create jobs, spur private investment, and ensure American communities can thrive.

8. Dismantle Needless Bureaucracy

The federal government's administrative bureaucracy has grown beyond the ability of any American to understand, choking the productive economy and creating a two-tiered class system of lawyer-lobbyist-consultants and everyone else. Federal agencies are sinking into a bureaucratic morass of their own making—spending an ever-increasing share of their budgets to layer new bureaucrats on top of old ones. In doing so, they perpetuate failed programs rather than providing services to Americans. Republicans must recognize that not only is the administrative state dehumanizing and unfair, but it has reached a tipping point of unsustainable complexity that risks collapse. In too many industries, government contractors are an extension of this administrative bureaucracy, operating with a thin veneer of supervision and no accountability. Beyond turning back unlawful regulations, we need to get to the root causes of this bureaucratic dysfunction and dismantle it to refocus federal agencies on their missions to serve the public.