

2007 - 2014

Tsongas Accomplishments



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Tsongas is making a difference

Congresswoman Niki Tsongas is known for her roots in the Third District and her years of public service to the region. In Congress, she's worked hard to make a real difference in the lives of servicemen and women serving on our behalf, military families supporting those who serve, and veterans seeking the care and benefits they've earned. She is a leading national voice in the fight against sexual assault in the military and has secured modern resources for soldiers, including better, safer body armor. Tsongas holds several leadership roles; she is the top Democrat on the Armed Services' Oversight & Investigations Subcommittee, and Co-Chairs the Military Sexual Assault Prevention Caucus and the Afghan Women Caucus.

“But nearly all of the new laws enacted in recent years — including a sweeping set of laws signed by President Obama Thursday — are the result of the quiet diligence of Turner and Tsongas, representing a rare example of bipartisanship in Congress.” - *For Tsongas and GOP colleague, a long fight on military sexual assault, by Bryan Bender, The Boston Globe, December 27, 2013*

Tsongas fights for middle class families who are looking for a fair shot at the American Dream, working to encourage job growth and support small business owners trying to grow their companies. Her actions help consumers harmed by predatory and abusive industries, seniors who want to retire with independence and dignity, women who deserve a voice to protect their rights and health, and students seeking to expand their opportunities.

“Tsongas' proposal favors America's small but energetic athletic footwear industry. It would save jobs and maybe even create a few. It would generate profits and tax revenue. It would be all-American.” – *Congress should run with Tsongas' idea, The Lowell Sun editorial, June 3, 2011*

She has become a leader in the push to protect our natural resources, such as the rivers and natural treasures that give the Third District its storied and revolutionary history. Tsongas successfully works in a bipartisan way, repeatedly partnering with colleagues on both sides of the aisle to author and advance legislation. In addition, her accessibility and accountability to the residents of the District she serves remains one of the hallmarks of her office.

The Lowell Sun wrote in 2012: “Tsongas has proven she is one of the more independent lawmakers in Massachusetts...She has shown a willingness to work with Republicans to advance the cause of a stronger economy and military...Tsongas listens, learns and makes the tough choices based on a multitude of information. We can't fault anyone who does their homework, and Tsongas does hers. Congress needs more lawmakers like Tsongas who will elevate civil discussion, embrace bipartisanship and stand up for causes that promote the common good.”

NOTABLE ACHIEVEMENTS



- **Tsongas does not accept paycheck during 2013 government shutdown:** Tsongas did not accept a pay check during the 2013 government shutdown, instead returning her money to the Treasury. She felt that refusing her paycheck was the right thing to do and a show of support for the hardworking public servants who are being forced to do the same.

“U.S. Rep. Niki Tsongas is my hero — again. Tuesday morning, the Lowell Democrat announced she, ‘would not accept a paycheck for the duration of the government shutdown.’ She did it before most other lawmakers jumped on the bandwagon...“At a time when Washington pols are barely hovering above the cesspool, it’s heartening when one of them sees something nauseating and then acts — boldly. No poll or focus group. No days of weighing the fallout. They just do it.” – *Margery Eagan, Boston Herald, October, 2013*

- **Tsongas receives award from Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition:** The Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition (MIRA) recognized Congresswoman Niki Tsongas at their annual “Give Liberty A Hand” Gala, for her work with constituents on immigration-related issues, as well as her support for immigration reform.
- **Tsongas receives Pinnacle Award from Chamber of Commerce:** The Boston Chamber of Commerce awarded Tsongas with the 2014 Pinnacle Award for Achievement in Government. She was recognized along with

other local business and community leaders, including Harvard University President Drew Faust.

- **Honored for contributions to Greater Lowell:** Tsongas was one of 50 local women recognized in 2012 for her contributions to Greater Lowell at a luncheon benefitting Lowell's *Women Working Wonders Fund*.
- **Tsongas appointed to Air Force Academy Board of Visitors:** Congresswoman Tsongas has served on the United States Air Force Academy Board of Visitors since first being appointed to the House Armed Services Committee in 2008. The Board of Visitors consists of 15 members appointed by the President and Congress. The Board of Visitors is responsible for providing oversight of the morale, discipline, curriculum, instruction, physical equipment, fiscal affairs, academic methods and other matters relating to the Academy. As a member of the Board of Visitors, Tsongas has continued her important work on sexual assault prevention and response.
- **Awarded the Charles Dick Medal of Merit:** In recognition of her work on behalf of the National Guard and Reserve members, Congresswoman Niki Tsongas was awarded the Charles Dick Medal of Merit in 2010.

When he presented her with the award, the Massachusetts Adjutant General said, "The MG Charles Dick Medal of Merit honors those who provide the legislative leadership that enables National Guard soldiers and airmen to meet their mission. Congresswoman Niki Tsongas' legislative agenda honors National Guard service by providing for health care at home; personal safety while at war; and dignity in retirement. I am honored to join the National Guard Association of the United States and the National Guard Association of Massachusetts in honoring her tireless and substantive support for America's citizen Soldiers."

- **Tsongas supports freezing Congressional pay:** Tsongas has helped introduce legislation to prevent Congress' scheduled pay raise from taking effect and voted to enact and extend a freeze in pay. When Tsongas was elected in 2007, she made a personal decision not to accept automatic congressional pay raises in years when they are in place, choosing instead to donate the amount of the pay raise to charity.
- **Tsongas cuts her own budget and returns money to taxpayers:** Tsongas has repeatedly returned a portion of her Member's Representational Allowance (MRA) to taxpayers. The MRA is the budget that Members of Congress receive annually for expenses associated with the day-to-day operation of their offices such as computer equipment, office supplies, staff

salaries, travel between Washington and their home Districts, and rent and utilities for their District offices. Tsongas supports legislation that would mandate that all amounts remaining in a Member's Representational Allowance after the end of a fiscal year to be used for deficit reduction, and voted to cut MRAs by 11.4% last Congress, and by an additional 8.2% during this Congress.

JOB CREATION



Make it in America Domestic Manufacturing initiatives

- **Tsongas efforts boost US footwear industry:** Tsongas has long called for a correction to a serious loophole within the DOD purchasing process that is costing American manufacturing jobs while inhibiting the ability of U.S. military personnel to train in high-quality American-made athletic footwear. She has championed legislation that will close the loophole, boost local and national footwear manufacturing while simultaneously supplying U.S. servicemembers with the best equipment possible. As a result of these efforts, in April of 2014, the Department of Defense announced it would change its policy and provide recruits with American-made footwear. New Balance, based in New England with a major facility in the Third District city of Lawrence, manufactures a compliant shoe and sees the decision as a potential boost to job creation.

The Lowell Sun editorial Board wrote: “Made in the USA. Does it matter? Yes, it does, and Americans can thank U.S. Reps. Niki Tsongas of Massachusetts and Mike Michaud of Maine for pushing the U.S. military to purchase U.S.-made footwear for our troops.”

- **Tsongas hosts “Make It In America” Town Hall...:** Tsongas hosted a town hall meeting with local employers and workforce development specialists to discuss ways to grow the domestic manufacturing base and promote policies that keep jobs in the United States rather than having them

sent overseas. The town hall was held at the New Balance factory in Lawrence which employs more than 800 Massachusetts workers. Tsongas held the town hall to hear directly from employers about ways to support their efforts to keep jobs in the United States. Experts at Tsongas' town hall all gave detailed input as to how we can nurture American manufacturing, how we can do a better job of training and retraining to meet the high-tech needs of employers, and how we can ensure that good jobs are available at every skill level.

- **...and introduces “Make It In America” Legislation:** After hearing directly from her constituents, Tsongas championed and supported a number of initiatives, including eliminating tax incentives for companies that move their operations overseas and creating incentives for companies that return to manufacture here, as well as a bill to better support a workforce training initiative that takes advantage of the role community colleges can play in working directly with local employers.

Promoting Job Growth in the region

- **Tsongas working to maintain critical DOD wide food research program, saving jobs:** The Combat Feeding Directorate at Natick Soldier Systems Center is the primary organization conducting research, development, integration, testing, and engineering for combat rations, field food service equipment and complete combat feeding systems for the Department of Defense and interagency partners like NASA. As a result of Tsongas' persistent advocacy, severe cuts to this program were reversed in the House-passed FY15 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), taking a major step forward in preserving this critical mission, which supports over 100 jobs in Massachusetts.
- **Tsongas introduces jobs legislation after hearing from Third District communities:** After hearing from communities she represents about the lingering effects of the recession on certain areas that were particularly hard-hit, Tsongas introduced the Helping Individuals Return to Employment (HIRE) Act, which would establish a grant program through the Department of Labor to allow areas of the country still battling high unemployment to hire people who are desperately seeking work while simultaneously providing an opportunity to invest in projects benefitting the community.

Barbara O'Neil, director of the Greater Lowell Workforce Investment Board, said the legislation would provide employment opportunities and new job skills to out-of-work residents.

"Having the opportunity to work and be productive in the community instills a sense of accomplishment and future employment opportunities," O'Neil said. *Jessica Andors, co-director of Lawrence Community Works*, said the bill will put "people to work in professions that will be meaningful and increase people's sense of civic engagement while building their community."

- **Tsongas champions tax incentives key to job creation:** Through letters, legislation, and testimony before key Congressional Committees, Tsongas has strongly advocated for extending tax credits vital to the economic growth of cities in the Third District and to the ability of Massachusetts businesses to create jobs. Tsongas has been a leading voice for extensions of Renewal Communities and Research & Development tax credits. The Renewal Communities program which has been used in Lowell alone to leverage millions of dollars in private investment, resulting in rehabbed commercial space and hundreds of new jobs. In downtown Lawrence, Renewal Communities wage incentives have helped New Balance Athletic Shoe, Inc. maintain their manufacturing operations in the United States, the last athletics shoemaker to make sneakers from stitch to final product in the U.S. Tsongas has also worked to extend the R&D tax credit so that the innovative abilities of the many businesses located in the Third District that rely on this credit are not threatened.

Support for Small Business

- **NSBA recognizes Tsongas as “Champion of Small Business Innovation”:** As a result of her work on behalf of Small Business, Congresswoman Tsongas was named a “Champion of Small Business Innovation” by the National Small Business Association, a national small business group, and the Small Business Technology Council.

Praising her work on the issue ever since coming to Congress, *the president of the NSBA*, a Republican, thanked Tsongas for her “indispensable and politically-courageous efforts” on behalf of small business.

- **Haverhill /Merrimack Valley small businesses get boost from Tsongas efforts:** Tsongas has long supported federal programs like the Small Business Administration’s microloans. She was in Haverhill in June, 2014 to announce \$200,000 in loan funds from the SBA to support small businesses throughout the Merrimack Valley.
- **Giving small businesses an edge when they compete for government contracts:** Small businesses that have specific specializations or expertise are often unable to compete for larger and more complex government

contracts. However, through so-called teaming arrangements they can identify and work with other small businesses to satisfy the needs of a given contract. Along with Republican Cynthia Lummis from Wyoming, Tsongas introduced The Small Business Fairness Act which would allow businesses to pool resources to compete for larger government procurement contracts and still keep their minority and disadvantaged contract status. This legislation will help small businesses that are owned by women and disabled veterans or which are located in Historically Underutilized Businesses (HUB) Zones, which includes parts of Fitchburg, Lowell, Lawrence, Haverhill and Methuen; pool their resources to more easily do business with the federal government.

- **Tax Relief for Small Businesses:** Tsongas introduced the Small Business Tax Relief and Retirement Restoration Act, bipartisan legislation which would provide immediate tax relief to small business owners who were forced to make withdrawals from their 401(k) s and IRAs to keep their businesses going during the small business credit crunch. Under Tsongas' bill, small business owners can treat their withdrawal as a loan and can file an amended tax return to receive refunds for any income taxes and early-withdrawal penalties they may have paid to the IRS over the last few years. By treating these withdrawals as a loan and allowing owners to repay them slowly, this bill will put money back in the hands of small business owners. The bill also creates an incentive for small business owners to restore the savings accounts they will need for retirement. Tsongas got the idea from a small business owner from the District.
- **Eliminating administrative burdens:** In response to concerns from Third District small business owners about the administrative burdens that a new provision requiring them to file additional 1099 forms with IRS would pose on them, Tsongas was one of the first members of her party to push for its repeal. This measure is now law. She also supported repeal of the onerous 3% withholding provisions which, while intended to reduce tax evasion, would have essentially forced small businesses to provide the government with months-long zero-interest loans. This measure is also now law.
- **Supporting the region's medical device companies:** When the Affordable Care Act was being debated, Tsongas opposed the medical device tax and worked to significantly reduce the amount of the tax. One of the goals in paying for healthcare reform was that the groups—such as insurance companies—most likely to benefit from the influx of new customers would help shoulder the costs. Large, well-established device manufacturers with

thousands of employees are likely to benefit from thousands of new customers. But smaller, emerging companies, many of which are located in Massachusetts, may be harmed by the device tax. Because the medical device tax has not been amended to distinguish between large, established companies and smaller, emerging companies and because she recognized the risk this poses to innovative employers in our state, Tsongas voted for its repeal.

- **Tsongas leadership helps save small business innovation research program and District jobs:** As a member of a select group of House and Senate members, appointed by Republican Speaker John Boehner, tasked with crafting a final defense bill, Tsongas was successful in including language, signed into law in 2011, which reauthorized the highly successful Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) program for six years. The SBIR program has functioned as a critical job creation tool in Massachusetts and has provided essential R&D funding for local firms while enabling inventors and engineers to start new businesses and deliver needed products to the market. Massachusetts has received the highest number of SBIR grant awards and total dollars, per capita, since the program's inception. However, some members of Congress were advocating changes to the program that would have altered its original intent and put Massachusetts small businesses at a distinct disadvantage. In addition, those changes would have also resulted in the federal government adopting 'second best' technology because of arbitrary quotas. The 6-year reauthorization of the program retains its proper focus on true small businesses and provides the certainty our small businesses need to plan ahead, make investments, and expand their workforce.

“Niki Tsongas and Ed Markey, both members of the Bay State's congressional delegation, have been working tirelessly to see SBIR funding approved for the short-term while advocating for the program's more certain future. It makes no sense to discourage the business sector by subjecting SBIR funding to short-term expiration dates, but that's been the case since 2008. Tsongas is pushing for a five- to seven-year window, so businesses can feel secure in building research and development strategies, meet SBIR goals, and be eligible for Phase II funding of \$1 million. We agree.” – *Enhance, expand SBIR grant program, The Lowell Sun editorial, September 22, 2011*

SUPPORT FOR LOCAL PROJECTS



Congresswoman Tsongas advocates for the residents of the Third District, fostering economic development and public safety through much needed federal assistance.

Public Safety

- **Assistance to first responders:** Since taking office, Tsongas has been a federal partner to public safety and has worked tirelessly to ensure our first responders have the resources necessary to do their jobs safely and efficiently. Tsongas has been a strong advocate for programs such as the AFG and Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER), which are the two main federal programs supporting local fire departments. The Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program (AFG) was created because fire departments often have difficulty purchasing proper equipment. A ladder truck for a local fire department can run upwards of one million dollars and outfitting one firefighter with turnout gear and breathing apparatus can exceed \$5,000. In addition, departments must fund training programs for paid and/or volunteer firefighters.

“I’m grateful for Congresswoman Tsongas’ efforts to work with our community and secure federal assistance to upgrade our public safety equipment,” *said Marlborough Mayor Arthur Vigeant*. “Federal grant opportunities like the SCBA grant are a valuable component to supplementing our local resources and help ensure our first responders have the resources and equipment they need.”

Below are a few examples of some of the communities that Tsongas has helped secure federal AFG grants:

- Fitchburg - \$435,364
 - Townsend - \$142,500
 - Pepperell - \$32,300
 - Devens - \$200,134
 - Lunenburg - \$50,806
 - Clinton - \$278,255
 - Marlborough - \$22,500
 - Stow - \$22,971
-
- **Lawrence Fire Department was awarded \$6,622,000 from the Department of Homeland Security:** This allowed the Lawrence Fire Department to rehire 23 firefighters who were laid off due to budgetary cutbacks. The funds also helped the department hire 15 new positions at the department for a total of 38 positions.
 - **Law Enforcement Video Sharing (LEVIS) for the Lowell Police Department:** The Lowell Police Department received \$150,000 in federal funds secured by Tsongas to support Phase 1 of their Law Enforcement Video Sharing program. The program allows for video surveillance and transmission of video data from remote sites, along with the purchase and installation of 14 new cameras in identified criminal hotspots to better ensure public safety.
 - **Funds secured to hire police officers in Lawrence:** Congresswoman Niki Tsongas helped to secure a \$750,000 COPS grant from the Department of Justice that would allow the Lawrence Police Department to hire 6 police officers. The City of Lawrence has struggled with rising crime in the face of significant budget shortfalls which forced deep cuts to the police force. Tsongas met with former Police Chief John Romero on several occasions to discuss ways to bring federal resources to Lawrence for crime prevention and repeatedly lobbied the Department of Justice for the COPS grant that was awarded. Additionally, in 2009, Tsongas helped to obtain funds from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act that enabled the Lawrence Police Department to hire 7 officers, for a total of 13 new positions.
 - **Drug prevention program gets boost from Tsongas efforts:** Tsongas helped secure \$280,000 to help the Essex County Sheriff's Department continue their "Towards No Drug Use" (TND) program which teaches drug

abuse and violence prevention to students at high schools throughout Essex County.

- **Public safety communications upgrade for the Haverhill Police Department:** At the request of Congresswoman Tsongas, the Haverhill Police Department received \$400,000 in federal funding to update and replace its existing public safety communications system. Replacing handheld and cruiser radios will dramatically increase the department's ability to protect the citizens of Haverhill as well as provide a reliable lifeline for officers.
- **IT Upgrade for the Maynard Police Department:** At Tsongas' request, the Maynard Police Department received \$150,000 in federal funds to support technical upgrades for a new public safety building. The town raised over 90 percent of the funds required for the construction of their new building - requesting the remaining 10 percent. One of the nine Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) regional bunkers is located within the Maynard PD's jurisdiction. Police officers have routinely responded to calls for assistance from FEMA, including routine patrols of the greater region and responding to suspicious vehicles.

Economic development & other local funding

LOWELL

- **Lowell Riverwalk Expansion, Canalway Improvements:** Tsongas helped secure \$712,000 in federal funds as well as a \$1,000,000 grant from the Department of Transportation for the expansion of the Riverwalk in the city of Lowell and for improvements to the downtown Canalway. The federal funding will be used for the development of the "Mile of Mills" Riverwalk along Bridge Street which will increase pedestrian traffic, while supporting the City's long term vision for the Riverwalk.
- **Helping make improvements to the Lowell Regional Transit Authority (LRTA):** With strong support from Tsongas, the LRTA received \$2.5 million in reallocated federal funding for the reconstruction of the Gallagher Terminal Parking Garage. The LRTA has begun work on this modernization project, which will replace the 30-year-old structure with a state-of-the-art parking garage. Tsongas also helped secure \$3.5 million in federal funds to install 1,900 solar panels on the roof at the LRTA's maintenance facility.

The solar array will provide 99.9% of the power for the facility which will lower energy consumption and deliver cost savings to the city.

Jim Scanlon, Executive Director of the Lowell Regional Transit Authority said in a statement: “We are very appreciative of the federal funding and send thanks to the Congresswoman for all she is doing for transportation in the region and thanks to Governor Patrick and his team who really recognized the need the LRTA had at the Gallagher parking garage to do something and do it quickly. This funding invests in a critical component of the LRTA and will push us into construction.”

- **Tsongas champions Lowell National Historical Park and Hamilton Canal District, Lowell’s signature economic development project:** The extraordinary transformation of Lowell began when the Lowell National Historical Park was established within the city’s core, the first urban national park of its kind in the United States. Tsongas has strongly supported public investment in the Park which has leveraged millions in private investment in the redevelopment of Lowell’s historic Hamilton Canal District. Fifteen acres of vacant and underutilized land in the Jackson, Appleton, and Middlesex Street area known as the Hamilton Canal District are being redeveloped into a vibrant, mixed-use neighborhood spanning the Merrimack, Pawtucket and Hamilton Canals. When complete, the Hamilton Canal District in the heart of Lowell will create nearly two million square feet for commercial, retail, and housing space, as well as hundreds of new jobs and an estimated \$400 million in annual tax revenue for the City.

“The Hamilton Canal District is the centerpiece of the future vision of downtown Lowell,” ***said State Senator Eileen Donoghue.*** “I can’t say enough about how great the partnership between state, local, and federal government has been. Governor Patrick understands the significance of this project for our city and Congresswoman Tsongas has been essential in securing the necessary federal funding.”

- **Tsongas bill signed into law eliminates roadblock so Hamilton Canal project can advance:** President Barack Obama signed a bill authored by Tsongas to authorize the transfer of federal land to the City of Lowell to help advance the city’s signature economic development project. The bill was one of three that Tsongas has had passed out of the highly-partisan Natural Resources Committee. During committee and House consideration of the bill, the Republican full and subcommittee chairmen both praised it.

Rep. Rob Bishop (R-UT), one of the most conservative members of the House, stated: “I really don’t have a question on this because Ms. Tsongas has done a good job on this bill,” calling it a “great bill” that would spur economic development in the community.

- **Improving the Canal Street Bridge:** The renovation of the Canal Street Bridge was a major milestone in the development of the Hamilton Canal District. Improvements to the bridge were made possible with a \$2 million federal grant secured by Tsongas and matching state funds. On the same day the bridge reopened, officials broke ground on a new office building at 110 Canal Street.
- **Expansion of Lowell Community Health Center:** Congresswoman Tsongas helped secure nearly \$800,000 in federal funds that was used to expand the Lowell Community Health Center and renovate the Hamilton Crossing on the Hamilton Canal in Lowell.
- **Tsongas secures funding for innovation and tech center at UMass Lowell:** Tsongas helped secure \$5 million in federal funds for UMass Lowell's New Emerging Technologies and Innovation Center. The 84,000-square-foot state-of-the-art research and academic facility is a hub for developing advanced manufacturing and other technologies: preparing students for emerging job sectors, fostering industry partnerships and offering cutting-edge research that could transform our understanding of science, energy and medicine. The EITC will continue UMass Lowell's century-long history as an engine of innovation and an industry training ground.
- **Supporting the City of Lowell as a national model for energy improvements to Historic Districts:** Tsongas aggressively supported a \$5 million federal grant award from the Department of Energy's Better Buildings program for the Carbon Neutral Downtown Park and Preservation District. The City of Lowell in partnership with the state's historic preservation office and the Lowell National Historical Park is using this grant to show that historic preservation and energy efficient building construction are compatible and is the first city in the country to take this approach. According to former City Manager Bernie Lynch, "This project will put numerous people back to work, reduce the utility costs associated with our downtown real estate, help protect the environment, and reinforce Lowell's emerging image as a progressive community on the rise."
- **Middlesex Community College downtown historic building redevelopment:** Tsongas helped to secure \$195,000 in federal funds to renovate the historic Rialto Building in downtown Lowell for use by Middlesex Community College's performing arts and music programs. MCC's performing arts and music programs and activities serve

not only students enrolled in courses at the college, but also the Lowell public school system, the National Park Service, and other public and private agencies and organizations with which the college regularly collaborates.

- **Tsongas secures funds for Lowell General Hospital Expansion Project:** Tsongas helped secure \$428,000 for the Lowell General Hospital Expansion Project which is designed to enhance the hospital and provide contemporary, clinically efficient facilities. The green-design six-story expansion project includes a new emergency department, private rooms, access to outpatient services, and growth areas for surgical services. Lowell General Hospital is one of the community's most venerable institutions, contributing to the health, welfare, vitality, and economic success of the City. It serves more than a quarter of a million patients each year. In addition, Lowell General Hospital is one of the City's largest employers.
- **Local Asthma Prevention gets boost from Tsongas efforts:** Tsongas secured a \$425,000 federal grant that will be used to prevent asthma among children living in public housing in Lowell as part of UMass Lowell's Healthy Homes Initiative. In recent years, the percentage of children in Lowell with asthma has been higher than both the state and national average. Asthma disproportionately affects low-income families and minority communities and is one of only four such programs nationwide to receive these federal funds.

LAWRENCE

- **Tsongas introduces legislation to help create more urban green space:** Tsongas' Groundwork USA Trust Act was developed in consultation with the non-profit group Groundwork Lawrence and would create a dedicated federal funding stream to ensure support for the 20 existing Groundwork programs nationwide, enabling other cities to launch similar initiatives.

“This legislation is extremely valuable to Lawrence and well as other underserved communities; it supports our efforts to leverage public, private, and foundation dollars for building truly sustainable communities,” *said Heather McMann, Executive Director of Groundwork Lawrence*

- **Clean energy collaboration facilitated by Tsongas:** Tsongas worked to bring together National Grid and Soltas Energy, a provider of solar energy solutions, so that a rooftop solar array of 2,000 panels could be installed on the rooftop of the historic Everett Mills in Lawrence. Lawrence-based Solectria Renewables built the converters for the solar array, making the

project a prime example of the economic benefits of clean energy technology both in reducing costs and supporting emerging domestic industries. The project created jobs in Lawrence and will provide clean, accessible and affordable power for the 35 diverse businesses at the Everett Mill.

- **Lawrence wins top prize in Boston Federal Reserve Working Cities Challenge:** The Federal Reserve Bank of Boston (FRBB) announced the City of Lawrence as the top winner of their Working Cities Challenge. The Working Cities Challenge is an initiative launched by the FRBB in May 2013, designed to support and sponsor small Massachusetts cities that foster opportunities for success to low-income residents. Several Third District communities were considered for this prestigious award, with support from Congresswoman Tsongas.

Lawrence Mayor Daniel Rivera said: “This is the real story of Lawrence – the story that doesn’t get told. It’s a story of partnership and tenacity that will overcome tough challenges. The City is delighted by this recognition, and we are ready to get to work.”

- **Giving a boost to local manufacturing – New Balance and Polartec:** Tsongas has been a strong supporter of Polartec and New Balance, two of the largest manufacturing companies in the Third District. She has strongly advocated for the Renewal Community Tax Credit Program which was created to assist employers in low income communities. Both New Balance and Polartec were able to utilize the employee tax credit of \$1,500 per employee at their Lawrence manufacturing and warehousing facilities to keep jobs here and support the local workforce. Tsongas has also urged U.S. Trade Ambassador Ron Kirk to prioritize U.S. manufacturing and American jobs during trade negotiations in support of New Balance, the only domestic manufacturer of athletic footwear. Tsongas has helped secure millions in funding for the development of innovative protective military clothing which is made at Polartec. Also, as a result of Tsongas’ longstanding efforts, in April of 2014 the Department of Defense changed a policy and will now provide recruits with American-made footwear, something it had not done due to a loophole in the purchasing process. New Balance manufactures a compliant shoe and sees the decision as a potential boost to job creation.

“Congresswoman Tsongas has been a champion for U.S. manufacturing throughout the course of her career and we are grateful for her support of the domestic footwear industry said,” **Matt LeBretton, VP of Public Affairs for New Balance.** “We welcome this policy change and look forward to getting further details on implementation from the Defense Department.”

- **Bringing increased transportation options to the Merrimack Valley Regional Transit Authority:** Tsongas helped to secure \$392,000 for the Merrimack Valley Regional Transit Authority (MVRTA) which will help purchase fourteen new buses to serve residents of Lawrence, Andover, Haverhill and Methuen.
- **Transforming textile mills along the Merrimack River:** Tsongas helped to secure \$743,500 in federal funds for the Union Crossing project in Lawrence which will transform a former textile mill along the Merrimack River into a mixed-use development to include family and workforce housing, commercial space and community facilities. Union Crossing is expected to produce approximately 200 new permanent jobs. It will also create an effective and innovative model for investing in older urban centers that combines best practices in both historic preservation and green building design to create a new neighborhood that is equitable, affordable and sustainable.
- **Securing funds for the Lawrence Gateway Project:** Tsongas helped to secure \$166,000 in federal funds for the Lawrence Gateway Project (LGP), which is a series of integrated public and private sector investments designed to revitalize the city's economic, environmental, residential, infrastructural, cultural and historical characteristics.
- **Northern Essex Community College Allied Health and Technology Center:** NECC's new Allied Health and Technology Center will revitalize downtown Lawrence, and will help the city better meet its educational, training, and economic needs by preparing more Lawrence residents for jobs in high-demand health care fields. Tsongas helped to secure \$381,000 for the 44,000 square foot facility which will feature a Health Education Simulation Center, where health care students will receive hands-on experience in simulated environments such as a hospital intensive care unit and operating room, an ambulance, and a doctor's office. The building will also include classrooms and computer labs and a Career Planning and Advising Center where students will receive academic and career counseling.
- **Helping Merrimack Valley seniors avoid health care fraud:** Tsongas helped to secure a \$270,000 federal grant that Elder Services of the Merrimack Valley (ESMV) will use to help elder residents of the Merrimack Valley avoid fraudulent Medicare scams. Since 1999, ESMV's has administered a Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP) program which reaches out to

Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries to help them avoid, detect, and prevent health care fraud.

FITCHBURG

- **Federal partnership key to Fitchburg Commuter Rail Line extension:**
At the end of 2011, Congresswoman Tsongas helped to sign a project construction grant agreement which will enable substantial improvements to the Fitchburg MBTA Commuter Rail Line. The \$270 million project, which includes double tracking along the line, construction of a new Littleton train station, and an extension of the line to a new commuter rail station at Wachusett, will shorten commute times, improve service, and create jobs. The Fitchburg line currently serves 10,000 commuters daily through 18 stations over nearly 50 miles but is often plagued by delays. Four separate but interconnected projects along the line will alleviate line congestion, add new parking, and allow the line to reach additional riders.
- **A boost to the Fitchburg Community Health Connections Center:**
Tsongas, Congressman Jim McGovern and former Congressman John Olver helped the new Fitchburg Community Health Connections Center (FCHC) facility acquire \$10.7 million in federal funding. Tsongas has been a longtime supporter of community health centers, and the affordable, quality health care they provide to millions of people across the country.
- **Fitchburg wins top prize in Boston Federal Reserve Working Cities Challenge:** The Federal Reserve Bank of Boston (FRBB) announced the City of Fitchburg earned the second-highest award in its Working Cities Challenge, an initiative launched by the FRBB in May 2013. The Challenge is designed to support and sponsor small Massachusetts cities that foster opportunities for success to low-income residents. Several Third District communities were considered for this prestigious award, with support from Congresswoman Tsongas.

Fitchburg Mayor Lisa Wong said: “Working collaboratively with the Federal Reserve will help Fitchburg implement our shared vision of success and inclusion for the downtown and university areas. We are excited that our hard work on finding solutions at the systems change level is being recognized and supported by a multi-year grant.”

HVERHILL

- **Support given to Haverhill Veterans Housing:** With help from \$260,000 in federal funds from the Neighborhood Stabilization Program, a program

Congresswoman Tsongas voted to create, the Veterans Northeast Outreach Center (VNEOC) opened two new housing units in Haverhill for previously homeless Massachusetts veterans. The veterans that will live in the new dwelling on Cedar Street have worked with VNEOC to find employment and transition back into the community.

- **Haverhill Intermodal Parking Facility:** In 2011, the Haverhill Intermodal Parking Facility officially opened. The new garage provides an additional 315 parking spaces for the Haverhill Commuter Rail Station and nearby newly-renovated mill buildings. The presence of the garage in downtown Haverhill will significantly boost economic development and job creation. More than \$8 million in federal monies helped to fund construction of the garage including a \$475,000 federal appropriation that Tsongas previously helped to secure for construction of the garage.
- **Haverhill Bridge TIGER Grant enables modernization:** Congresswoman Tsongas helped secure a \$10 million TIGER (Transportation Improvements Generation Economic Recovery) grant for repairs to the Merrimack River Railroad Bridge in Haverhill. The bridge is used by Commuter Rail, Amtrak, and freight trains daily but is in need of improvements. The funding will update and improve the bridge in the short term and over the long term will ultimately relieve congestion on busy streets, connect smaller communities to major urban areas, reduce emissions, spur economic growth and create jobs.
- **Solar Panels for the Haverhill Citizens Energy Efficiency Project:** The Haverhill Citizens Center serves hundreds of residents every day, including many of Haverhill's elderly population. It houses Haverhill's Council on Aging, Cultural Council, Veterans Offices, Recreational and Youth Services Programs. The building suffers from tremendous energy inefficiency, yet its original 1960's design was supposed to capitalize on cutting edge energy efficiency measures, including solar and geothermal possibilities which were never realized. Tsongas secured \$238,000 to help renovate and install solar panels at the Haverhill Citizens Center, which may also be used as a model for an energy efficiency project that preserves original infrastructure.
- **Helping Haverhill students stay in school:** Tsongas helped to secure a new \$700,000 federal grant that is helping Haverhill students to stay in school. The grant is funding a new program entitled Youth Engaging for Success (YES) that will help identify middle school students in Haverhill who may be at risk of dropping out and help them stay in school. The grant funds will

also enable Haverhill High School to add staff to its existing support programs, a move that allows more students to participate in Haverhill's successful Jobs for Bay State Grads, the Success Academy and Haverhill High Alternative night school program. A YES summer school program to help address the transition from 8th – 9th grade will also be added.

MARLBOROUGH

- **Local company receives SBIR support for body armor development:** To help support the development of their groundbreaking technology, Marlborough's Xtalic received a \$100,000 SBIR grant. Tsongas led the successful fight to reauthorize the SBIR program which has been described as the government's most successful research and development program, and has been vital to creating jobs and fostering innovation in Massachusetts. Xtalic's innovations utilize very high strength, light-weight metal that the military uses for a variety of applications. This technology could also potentially be used to develop lighter-weight body armor for troops in the field, which Tsongas has fought for since being elected to Congress.

METHUEN

- **Secured funding for Methuen I-93 rotary improvement:** Tsongas obtained \$900,000 in the Interstate Maintenance Discretionary Fund within the Federal Housing Administration budget for this project. She also supported the Surface Transportation Extension Act that was enacted in 2012, authorizing \$105 billion in funding for transit and highway projects. The funding included \$1.2 billion for Massachusetts, of which the state will be reimbursed \$55 million, or about 80 percent of the Methuen Interchange project. Ground was broken on the project in 2014.

“On the congressional level, the seeds of this rotary design were sown to some degree by former Rep. Marty Meehan and his successor, Niki Tsongas...Tsongas also joined others in Congress by supporting an \$105 billion transportation bill that included \$1.2 billion for Massachusetts. Because of that, the state will be reimbursed for 80 per-cent of the project's cost.” *The Lowell Sun Editorial Board, July 7, 2014*

- **Tsongas assists Methuen company expand and remain in the city:** Century Box Company is a second generation family owned business. In recent years, Century Box has struggled with the demands of meeting customer needs while operating in an undersized facility. The owners were aggressively recruited by two other states offering substantial incentives to

relocate and were tempted to leave Massachusetts due to the constraints of the size of their facility. Congresswoman Tsongas worked with Polartec, the abutting land owner, to consider selling a parcel of land adjacent to Century Box to accommodate the 57,000SF expansion doubling the size of the building. Century Box is investing \$5.25 million in the building expansion and new equipment and will double the size of the workforce from 89 to 188 full time jobs. Congresswoman Tsongas' office facilitated meetings with the City of Methuen Planning and Development staff, Massachusetts Office of Business Development, Massachusetts Workforce Development and Massachusetts Development staff. As a result of these discussions the company received a 10 year TIF with the city valued at \$126,720 and an Economic Assistance Coordinating Council approval of \$1.1million in EDIP Investment Tax Credits.

SUBURBAN COMMUNITIES

- **Concord's Barrett's Farm preserved:** Tsongas' bill to protect Colonel James Barrett's farm in Concord, was signed into law by President Obama in March 2009. The bill allowed this historic site, which was the impetus for the British march on Concord and Lexington, to be brought within the boundaries of Minute Man National Park, so that current and future generations can learn about the important role it played in the birth of our nation.
- **Through Tsongas efforts, Federal Transit Authority commits \$3.2 million for an expanded rail trail parking lot in Ayer:** Former Congressman Marty Meehan secured \$3.2 million to build a new Ayer Parking Facility for both rail commuters and the thousands of visitors utilizing the Nashua River Rail Trail for recreation. However, when the state failed to provide the required 20% match, the federal funds were put at risk and Congresswoman Tsongas's office immediately worked with Town of Ayer planning and historic boards, Montachusett Area Regional Transportation (MART) officials and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Executive Office of Housing and Community Development (EOHCD) to creatively finance the required 20% match. The Ayer funding was due to sunset in 2011, but officials credit Tsongas for convincing the FTA to keep the funding in place for the long-contemplated project.
- **Bringing clean energy options to Lancaster:** Tsongas helped to secure \$500,000 in federal funding to build 4,500 solar panels (making it the largest such site in the state) on a capped former town landfill in Lancaster. The

831-kilowatt field will be used to offset Lancaster's energy use for its public buildings, as well as stimulate the local economy through investment and job creation. It will also offset 878,000 lbs of CO2 emissions annually, and will produce approximately the same amount of electricity as 35,000 barrels of oil.

- **Horizons for Homeless Children**: Tsongas helped to secure a \$95,000 federal appropriation for Horizons for Homeless Children (HHC) which operates a network of Playspace Programs in the Third District and throughout Massachusetts. These programs provide homeless children in shelters with the opportunity to benefit from developmentally-appropriate play opportunities, mitigating the harmful lifelong impact of homelessness on those children.

Communicating with Constituents

By the end of 2014, Congresswoman Tsongas' office will have corresponded by mail with more than **200,000** people in the Third District of Massachusetts since she took office, providing information on topics of interest and answering questions.

In seven years, Congresswoman Tsongas' office has helped more than **9,000** individuals and organizations in the Third District. For example, Tsongas' office has assisted constituents cut through IRS red tape, navigate the immigration processes, get answers on housing issues and receive veteran's benefits.

Over the first 6 months of 2014 alone, Tsongas' office has helped people in the Third District receive monetary benefits and refunds from the federal government totaling approximately **\$356,000**.

- **Tsongas hosts Third District Day in Washington, D.C.**: Tsongas continues a great tradition by regularly hosting Third District Day, a unique opportunity for residents to interact with lawmakers, public officials, media personalities, business leaders and more, as well as provide a firsthand look at how the Capitol works. Open to the public, Tsongas invites residents from all around the Third District to come to Washington, D.C. to attend this day-long seminar that provides in-depth insight on a wide variety of issues facing Massachusetts and America as a whole. It is always a meaningful day full of interesting and productive discussions. The 2014 event, which was the 19th of its kind, featured presentations by: TV and radio journalist Luke Russert; former Boston Police Commissioner and former Lowell Police Department

Superintendent Ed Davis; Senators Elizabeth Warren and Ed Markey; Ted Leonsis, owner of the Washington Capitals and Washington Wizards and a Lowell High School graduate; General James F. Amos, Commandant of the U.S. Marine Corps, and many more.

- **Veterans Advisory Committee:** Soon after her election to Congress, Tsongas formed a Veterans Advisory Committee, which brings together local veterans, military families, elected leaders, veterans' agents, and other veterans care representatives to identify ways to better serve District veterans and their families. Tsongas consults with members of the Advisory Committee when crafting legislation to assist veterans, such as the PTSD bills that she introduced in 2008 and legislation to accelerate the development of lighter weight body armor.

“Locally, we have advocates in our...local congressmen -- U.S. Rep. Niki Tsongas, a Lowell Democrat who's made veterans issues a high priority.” – *The Lowell Sun Editorial Board, May 27, 2014*

- **Visiting and partnering with employers in the District:** Tsongas has made it a priority to visit local companies and employers in all parts of the District to discuss ways to support them at the federal level. The District is home to pioneering companies like American Superconductor, New Balance, Raytheon, Nuvera Fuel Cells, Solectria Renewables, Sunovion Pharmaceuticals and many others. She has taken recent visits to:
 - Dunn & Co - A publishing company in Clinton
 - eHealth - An online health insurance company in Westford
 - Simonds International - A tool manufacturer in Fitchburg
 - ReWalk - A company in Marlborough that makes exoskeletons for injured veterans, and many others
 - Advanced Cable Tie Inc. – A Gardner manufacturer of plastics

Elizabeth Penny from the GGCC, who helped arrange the event, said this was not the first time the congresswoman has visited a Gardner business. “She has come three times to see what challenges small business owners face when starting a business in North Central Massachusetts,” *Ms. Penny said.* – *The Gardner News, March 24, 2014*

Tsongas has always said that she can be a better advocate for the innovative work being done in the District when she has seen it firsthand.

“We were extremely pleased to host Congresswoman Niki Tsongas at our corporate headquarters in Marlborough,” *said Mr. Nobuhiko Tamura, a top executive at Sunovion in Marlborough.* “Sunovion is very committed to strengthening the community where our employees live and work and ensuring a thriving life sciences industry in Massachusetts. We had the opportunity to

discuss several important topics and ideas with the Congresswoman and her team and look forward to working together to achieve these mutual goals.”

- **Hosts 2014 Immigration Forum:** Tsongas hosted a free immigration workshop at the Senior Center in Lawrence, open to the public that included presenters discussing topics such as Eligibility for Lawful Permanent Residence, The Naturalization Process, Rights & Responsibilities of U.S. Citizenship, and Unauthorized Practice of Immigration Law. Attendees met directly with immigration experts from the Congresswoman’s staff, representatives from the U.S. Citizenship & Immigration Services (USCIS) and the Massachusetts Immigrant & Refugee Advocacy Coalition (MIRA) to ask questions and discuss their own individual situations.
- **Connecting with residents through ‘Congress on Your Corner’ events:** Shortly after her election, Tsongas started her *Congress on Your Corner* program which regularly takes her to local supermarkets and other high traffic venues in the Third District on weekends to meet face to face with constituents. Tsongas has made accessibility to the people she represents the hallmark of her office and spends most days that Congress is not in session visiting with the residents and communities that make up the District.
- **Hosts Town Halls & Telephone Town Halls:** On perhaps the biggest legislative issue of the past several decades, the Affordable Care Act, Congresswoman Tsongas held four town hall meetings to hear directly from her constituents on health care legislation being considered by the House of Representatives. Congresswoman Tsongas also hosted nearly a dozen telephone town hall meetings on health care, as well as numerous meetings with seniors, physicians, hospitals, nurses and other health care stakeholders in the District. She regularly hosts telephone town hall meetings to hear from residents in an efficient way, allowing them to speak directly to her from the comfort of their own homes about the issues important to them.
- **Establishes eNewsletter Program to reach out to residents:** Tsongas sends out a regular eNewsletter to more than 8,000 and counting residents to provide her perspective on legislation before Congress and to solicit opinions, ideas, and input from her constituents.
- **Innovative Cities Conference:** Tsongas hosted a Congressional policy hearing in Lowell that featured testimony from a series of experts regarding the economic growth and improved livability of small to mid-sized cities. The hearing was part of a three day innovative cities conference in Lowell

that Tsongas helped organize. Tsongas, who has made the health and growth of the nation's cities a major priority as part of her work in Congress, is using the recommendations made by the panelists at the hearing as part of her efforts to encourage the formation of a comprehensive national urban policy. Tsongas wants to ensure that small to mid-sized cities like those in the Merrimack Valley are included in national urban policy so that it is not focused exclusively on larger cities like Chicago, New York, or Los Angeles.

- **Tsongas hosts Public Safety Grants Forum:** Congresswoman Niki Tsongas has hosted several forums to help provide local first responders with the resources and information they need to secure public safety grants from the Federal and state government.
- **Tsongas hosts agriculture roundtable with District Farmers:** The District is home to more than 800 farms, ranging from dairy herds to wholesale nurseries to apple orchards. Since taking office, Congresswoman Tsongas has made the agricultural economy in the District a priority. Most of these are family farms which face unique challenges in an ever changing agricultural climate. Congresswoman Tsongas regularly hosts roundtable discussions with District farmers to talk about issues affecting them and their businesses as well as policies that they would like to see enacted at the Congressional level. Tsongas has also toured local farms, helped to secure grants and other forms of federal assistance for farmers, and solicited their opinions when formulating federal farm and nutrition policies.
- **Tsongas holds jobs forum in Lawrence:** Tsongas hosted a jobs forum in Lawrence with local employers, labor groups, and city and state representatives to solicit ideas and discuss policies needed to help drive job creation and reduce unemployment. The forum entitled: *Lessons from the Frontline: A Jobs Creation Roundtable* examined topics such as, what is working in the local economy, what are the opportunities and obstacles to promoting hiring in local communities, what role do tax incentives play in where businesses locate and whom they hire, and what should be done at the federal level to help employers create jobs.
- **Helping organizations navigate the Federal grants process:** Tsongas hosted a forum at UMass Lowell to help localities, first responders and non-profit groups take advantage of the stimulus funds and annual Agency funding distributed through formula and competitive grants. Participants in the forum heard from experts on topics such as navigating the federal grants

process, best practices for grant research and writing as well as strategies for collaboration and regionalization in the grants process.

- **Sharing new information about housing grant opportunities with District cities and towns:** Tsongas hosted a forum in Lawrence with representatives from the Department of Housing and Urban Development to inform the cities and towns in the District of the federal resources available to help mitigate the harsh impacts of the current housing crisis and to help communities recover from the challenges presented by the growing number of foreclosures in these neighborhoods. Grant funding for municipalities was included in a significant housing bill passed by Congress and more than a dozen communities from throughout the District were able to participate in the Forum.
- **Nonprofits Roundtable in Lawrence:** Congresswoman Tsongas hosted a roundtable in Lawrence with nonprofit organizations to talk about their needs and ways the federal government can provide support to them as they work to address issues like hunger and poverty.

EDUCATION



As a teacher at an alternative school and a dean at Middlesex Community College – the Commonwealth’s largest community college – Tsongas witnessed firsthand the impact education has on an individual and a family. Massachusetts, where the first public schools in America were established, has always made education a priority. Tsongas believes we must treat education as an investment in our future, as it is also the key to our nation’s global competitiveness, affecting everything from the economy to clean energy.

Middlesex Community College President Carole Cowan praised Congresswoman Tsongas: "It doesn't surprise me at all the Niki realizes the values of our community colleges," *Cowan said.* "As a Dean at Middlesex for 10 years, Niki saw first-hand that we can provide everyone an opportunity to be successful in college. Keeping tuitions affordable and making sure that financial aid is an attractive asset for our students is paramount. We are lucky to have Congresswoman Tsongas as our partner, because she knows that legislation like this will help keep our workforce development strong and meet the emerging needs of our community partners."

- **Financial literacy bolstered by Tsongas amendment:** In July, 2014 the House of Representatives passed a bipartisan amendment to H.R. 4984, the *Empowering Students Through Enhanced Financial Counseling Act* that would connect students with the financial management resources they need to be successful. The bipartisan amendment was authored by Rep. Niki Tsongas (D-MA), Rep. Derek Kilmer (D-WA), Rep. Rubén Hinojosa (D-TX), Rep. Spencer Bachus (R-AL) and Rep. Tom Petri (R-WI). This bipartisan amendment would direct universities and the Department of

Education to introduce students to the financial management resources provided by the Financial Literacy and Education Commission.

- **Ensuring access to Higher Education for all students:** Tsongas has hosted multiple financial aid roundtables bringing together state and local elected officials, higher and secondary education counselors, as well as representatives from local lending institutions to discuss issues related to higher education accessibility and affordability.
- **Making higher education more affordable:** Tsongas has long supported Congressional action to keep student loans affordable. She has voted in support of legislation to keep rates low and has urged for a comprehensive, long-term plan. She penned an OpEd in 2012 for the Andover Townsman, putting forth the idea to keep student-loan rates low by repealing oil subsidies.
- **Promoting the importance of Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) Education:** Tsongas is a member of the STEM Caucus and has cosponsored a number of bills to improve STEM education, including legislation to create a refundable tax credit for students pursuing undergraduate degrees in STEM education and legislation to incent partnerships in renewable energy as part of a comprehensive program to enhance STEM instruction in high school and college.
- **Providing quality primary and STEM education to children on military bases:** Through the annual defense bill in 2013, Tsongas helped to secure \$36 million for construction of an elementary school at Hanscom Air Force Base, which is currently under construction. Tsongas is also a strong advocate for the DOD's STARBASE Program, a nationwide program that provides Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) education to elementary school students. There are 76 academies in 40 states providing hands-on STEM lessons for elementary students, primarily 5th graders. Tsongas has continuously advocated for funding of this important and effective program, writing letters of support to leaders of both parties urging them to support STARBASE. The only STARBASE program in New England is located at Hanscom AFB, where students from Lowell, Lawrence and Fitchburg have all participated in the program.
- **Keeping kids healthy so they perform better at school:** Tsongas fought repeated attempts by House Republicans to gut the SNAP (food stamp) program by \$33 billion. The SNAP program feeds more than 15 million

children nationwide, and reduces by half the number of children each year that would otherwise face extreme poverty and hunger. Hunger has a residual, negative impact on a child's education. Tsongas has heard from school officials who voiced concerns about students who arrive at school hungry and as a result, have a harder time concentrating.

“While some of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle still doubt that hunger is a problem in the 21st century in America, I know that in the cities and communities I represent, too many families, and especially too many children, have trouble getting enough food. School officials in my district have shared with me that free breakfasts on Monday mornings see the highest attendance because some kids have gone hungry all weekend.” – *Niki Tsongas, September, 2013*

ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY & NATURAL RESOURCES



- **Tsongas legislation to help designate the Nashua River as Wild & Scenic passed the House in 2014:** The House of Representatives passed a bill authored by Congresswoman Tsongas that would take steps toward protecting the Nashua River. The bill passed with unanimous bipartisan support. Tsongas’ Nashua River Wild and Scenic River Study Act (H.R. 412) authorizes the National Park Service (NPS) to conduct a study on the Nashua River and two of its tributaries, the Squannacook and Nissitissit Rivers, to determine their eligibility for designation as Wild & Scenic Rivers.

Elizabeth Ainsley Campbell, Executive Director of the Nashua River Watershed Association, said “This legislation will help advance the protection of the entire river system and we are thrilled to see it move forward.”

In his closing statement at a subcommittee hearing last year, *Republican Chairman of the Natural Resources Subcommittee on Public Lands and Environmental Regulation Rob Bishop* (R-Utah) thanked Congresswoman Tsongas for her work on this bill and said he is, “supportive of what you’re trying to do here and of the study.”

- **Member of Natural Resources Committee & Sustainable Energy & Environmental Coalition:** Tsongas is a member of the House Natural Resources Committee where she has strongly advocated for major environmental issues, such as the need to pursue clean energy, stronger offshore drilling regulations, protecting local rivers and natural treasures, and adequately funding and preserving National Parks. She has had several of her bills passed out of this highly partisan committee and signed into law. For example, her legislation to preserve and protect the Nashua River was recently passed in a unanimous, bipartisan way by the House of Representatives. She is also a founding member of the Sustainable Energy & Environmental Coalition (SEEC), where she works to help identify opportunities to support and improve energy efficiency and renewable energy efforts. The caucus is focused on ensuring that no opportunity is missed to adopt tangible climate change policy and help American firms participate in the next wave of technological expansion.
- **Promotes and protects area rivers with annual River Day:** Each year Tsongas hosts River Day, when she and a group of volunteers visit various rivers and sites around the District to promote the conservation and importance of the region's beautiful natural resources. Over the past seven years, River Day has made stops in a dozen towns around the District, from Hudson and Fitchburg, to Lowell and Lawrence, to Maynard and Concord, traversing each of the main rivers that form the region's important network of waterways. Congresswoman Tsongas has met with hundreds of environmentalists, business owners, students, volunteer organizations, local officials and constituents since she began hosting the event in 2007, to discuss how we can collaboratively protect and enhance these waterways for future generations.
- **EPA announces plan to cut carbon emissions, mirroring local initiative:** In June, 2014 the EPA unveiled a plan to promote public health by improving air quality across the nation. The proposal plans to cut carbon pollution from existing power plants by 30 percent by 2030. The plan embraces state-run programs such as the Northeast's Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) to meet lower emissions standards. Rep. Tsongas and Rep. Annie Kuster (NH-02) had written a letter to EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy, urging them to look at RGGI as a model to be used in other regions. The letter cited RGGI as a proven example for cutting carbon pollution and driving economic development, while protecting the public's health and the environment. The lawmakers' letter encouraged the EPA to look toward the program as the agency worked to set federal standards to cut

carbon pollution from the nation's existing power plants. The letter was co-signed by 39 other lawmakers from the Northeast United States.

- **Tsongas supports Wind Production Tax Credit:** Tsongas has been a strong supporter of renewable energy, especially wind energy. She has advocated for extending the wind production tax credit, speaking several times on the House Floor in favor of this important clean energy initiative. The wind industry has proven to be beneficial for the environment, American manufacturing, and high-skilled job creation in Massachusetts.

“Members of the Massachusetts congressional delegation are hopeful two federal tax credits designed to boost wind energy production will be extended... U.S. Rep. Niki Tsongas, D-Lowell, a member of the House Sustainable Energy and Environment Coalition, noted the increasing reliance on wind energy in her district and other areas of the state. She contended in a recent statement on the House floor that the credits' extension would contribute to job creation in the state.” – *Mass. Legislators push for renewal of expiring wind energy credits, Worcester T&G, 10/7/2012, by Lisa Hagen and Joel Senick*

- **Tsongas, Rivera Announce EPA action on Merrimac Paper Co. Site:** In June, 2014 Lawrence Mayor Dan Rivera, Tsongas and others announced the results of the Environmental Protection Agency's removal site evaluation concerning asbestos contamination identified at portions of the Merrimac Paper Company Site. With a long, troubled history and then a major fire this January, the Merrimac Paper Site has been a key concern for the city. Over the course of the removal process Tsongas' office will play a key role in maintaining a continuous chain of communication across all levels of government at the Merrimac Paper Company Site. The project took another major step forward in the fall of 2014 when the EPA announced a plan has been approved and will move forward with a \$2 million commitment from the federal government.
- **Supporting reduced energy costs at Mann Orchards, Carlson Orchards, Shaw Farm:** Both Mann Orchards in Methuen and Carlson Orchards in Harvard recently opened their new solar array which will cut energy costs for each farm by tens of thousands of dollars annually and was funded by state and federal grants which were obtained with help from Tsongas' office. Lawrence-based Solectria Renewables built the converters for the solar array at Mann Orchards, making the project a prime example of the economic benefits of clean energy technology both in reducing costs and supporting emerging domestic industries. Likewise, Tsongas worked with the Shaw Family in Dracut to help them secure an \$18,000 tax credit to build their new bottling facility at the 104 year old farm. The grant allowed the Shaw

family to install a geothermal heating and AC unit to dramatically reduce annual energy costs. Tsongas has been a strong supporter of federal tax credits like these which help businesses to reduce energy costs while simultaneously benefiting the environment.

- **Increasing accountability in response to the Gulf Oil Spill:** In 2010, the House of Representatives passed the Consolidated Land, Energy, and Aquatic Resources (CLEAR) Act, which constitutes Congress' response to the BP oil spill. The CLEAR Act includes a provision originally introduced by Congresswoman Niki Tsongas as part of her Oil Spill Preparation and Protection Act, which would require oil companies to submit detailed plans on how they would contain and cleanup a worst-case scenario oil spill. The required plans would force oil companies to address potential catastrophic occurrences, and have in place contingency plans in the event that early attempts to contain a spill fail. Tsongas is a member of the Natural Resources Committee, which was responsible for drafting major portions of the CLEAR Act.
- **Growing the green technology industry:** Tsongas hosted an economic development summit in Haverhill which brought together major local employers, community leaders, and economic development experts to discuss ways to grow green collar jobs in the District.
- **Introduced Groundworks Lawrence legislation:** Creating green-space and public parks in urban communities is an excellent way to revitalize neighborhoods and further economic development in our cities. The City of Lawrence has worked extensively with Groundwork Lawrence to transform blighted areas of the city into usable community space. Tsongas introduced legislation to create a Groundwork USA Trusts Program that would provide grants of up to \$400,000 to local communities for development programs that address brownfields and blighted urban environments. The total authorization would be \$15 million for each fiscal year through FY2015, which would allow Groundwork USA to produce 5-8 new Trusts each year. Last year alone, every dollar that the EPA invested in GWUSA projects was leveraged to \$15 by local Trusts.
- **At Tsongas invitation, Interior Secretary Salazar visits Lowell:** At the invitation of Congresswoman Tsongas, former U.S. Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar visited Lowell for a tour of the Lowell National Historical Park, the nation's first urban National Park. Tsongas urged Secretary Salazar to visit Lowell NHP to see a firsthand example of the important role that

National Parks can play in both the economic development and cultural preservation of cities. Following the tour the Secretary commented that Lowell NHP could be "a model" for urban national parks throughout the nation, including in such cities as St. Louis and Los Angeles.

- **Tsongas facilitates I-93 Project breakthrough:** In 2010, Tsongas helped to facilitate a major breakthrough in the proposed I-93 interchange project that has the potential to create thousands of jobs in the Merrimack Valley. Former U.S. Secretary of Transportation Ray LaHood visited the District at Tsongas' invitation and indicated his support for moving the interchange project forward. The Secretary facilitated an agreement with all parties on a final design of the interchange and the environmental review process is now underway. The I-93 Junction development area has one of the largest concentrations of employment in northeastern Massachusetts and is considered one of the economic development "hubs" for life sciences and high-tech companies in Massachusetts. Estimates for new job growth from the I-93 project are close to 10,000 employees, \$400-\$800 million in new payroll, \$30-\$60 million in new state taxes and \$4-\$6 million in local property taxes. Previously, Tsongas helped to obtain a \$712,500 federal appropriation that will be used for the design and construction of the new interchange.
- **Tsongas creates win/win by linking local clean energy companies with the Department of Defense:** The Third District is home to one of the largest concentrations of clean energy employers in New England. At the same time, the Department of Defense, the largest institutional consumer of fossil fuels in the country using over 300,000 barrels of oil per day and 3.9 billion kilowatt hours of electricity per year, has set a target of obtaining 25% of its energy from renewable sources by 2025. Tsongas, as a member of the Armed Services Committee, recognized an opportunity to connect some of the District's innovative local clean energy companies with the Department of Defense to inform them of the DOD's new clean energy focus, as well as to discuss how these local companies could potentially form partnerships and compete for contracts related to the DOD's clean energy initiatives.

CONSUMER PROTECTION



- **The FASTT Checks Act:** After hearing from constituents about trouble accessing their deposited funds, Tsongas introduced the Faster Access and Shorter Transaction Time for Checks Act (FASTT Checks Act) which would provide consumers with the ability to access their deposited funds sooner. Under current law, a bank can place a 7-business day hold on checks over \$5,000 despite the fact that most checks are now processed electronically giving banks almost instant access to the funds being deposited. Prior to electronic banking, banks had reason to hold checks to ensure that payment would in fact be made by another bank. But in today's world of e-commerce, when a check is cashed the funds are transferred nearly instantaneously. Banks continue to use the seven day check hold rule to inflate their balance sheets, and earn interest on money that is not theirs. By shortening the hold time that banks are able to place on a check to two business days and counting Saturday as a business day, Tsongas' bill ensures that funds will be available to the customer in a timely manner, unless the bank has reason to suspect fraud or the account is repeatedly overdrawn.
- **The STOCK Act:** In 2012, the Stop Trading on Congressional Knowledge Act (STOCK Act), of which Tsongas was one of the first sponsors was signed into law. The legislation would prevent lawmakers from using knowledge they obtain in their professional capacity for personal financial gain.

- **Limiting the influence of corporate money in elections:** Congresswoman Tsongas introduced a bill to protect taxpayer dollars entitled the No Taxpayer Money for Corporate Campaigns Act, which bars federal funds from being spent to influence the outcome of elections.
- **Tsongas bill increasing consumer access to credit scores signed into law:** After hearing from constituents who couldn't access their own credit scores—scores used to decide the amount of credit they would be given or the interest rates they would be offered on mortgages, car loans, or college loans—Tsongas offered an amendment enacted into law as part of Wall Street Reform to increase consumer access. Tsongas believes that a credit bureau should have to provide the same type of credit score to both consumers and lenders, or to not sell that type of score to either, placing consumers and lenders on a more level playing field. If a bureau chooses to sell a type of score to a lender, it must also make that type of score available to the consumer.

Veterans

- **Tsongas initiative to help servicemembers married to foreign spouses access their tax rebate becomes law:** After *Stars and Stripes* and other organizations began reporting that servicemembers married to foreign spouses were ineligible to receive 2008 stimulus checks because of a provision intended to prevent illegal immigrants from receiving checks, Tsongas spear-headed a joint letter from House members to the Chairman of the Ways and Means Committee requesting that the glitch be addressed. Her remedy was included in the Heroes Earnings Assistance and Relief Tax Act of 2008 which became law on June 17, 2008.
- **Tsongas protects troops from predatory lenders:** Tsongas joined in introducing the Military Savings Act, legislation to promote savings rates among military servicemembers and to decrease their vulnerability to predatory payday lenders in times of financial crisis. The legislation establishes a pilot program in which financial institutions operating on military bases will offer innovative financial products to help troops and their families improve their financial situations. Military servicemembers are three times more likely than civilians to resort to predatory “payday” loans that charge exorbitant interest rates.

Seniors

- **Tsongas introduces bipartisan SSI Savers Act to help low-income seniors:** Tsongas has introduced bipartisan legislation to help low-income seniors who rely on the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) program to meet basic needs such as food, clothing, shelter, and other necessities. Current law requires seniors and the disabled to spend down almost all their retirement savings before they qualify for SSI, a policy which often impoverishes them and makes them solely reliant on the federal government. Tsongas' legislation sensibly updates the savings and assets which seniors can retain when they need to go on SSI, encouraging greater savings among seniors and saving taxpayers money in the long term.

The Corporation for Enterprise Development (CFED) said in statement, "We applaud Congresswoman Tsongas and Congressman Petri for introducing legislation that will enable low-income people with disabilities to work, and save and build wealth. CFED, a national nonprofit working to expand economic opportunities for all Americans, appreciates any action that would allow asset-poor Americans the ability to build a nest-egg for themselves in times of emergency or to pay for an asset that would improve their financial self-reliance. Reforming the SSI asset limit test would help SSI recipients to rely less on government assistance and provide them a stepping stone towards financial security."

- **Tsongas announces introduction of bill to ease tax burden for senior citizen volunteers:** Tsongas introduced the *Senior and Retired Volunteers Act (SERV Act)*, legislation that provides targeted federal tax relief to senior citizens participating in Massachusetts' local volunteer programs, while also relieving local communities from bureaucratic burdens around that volunteer work.

"This bill is an obvious win-win for cities and seniors. Volunteering speaks to healthy living and healthy aging," said Rosanne DiStefano, Executive Director of Elder Services of the Merrimack Valley. "This effort will encourage more seniors to remain active and use what they can to help others, in addition to removing the red tape that will allow more cities to participate in the benefit program."

EQUALITY AND CIVIL RIGHTS



LGBT

- **Strong advocate for the Employment Nondiscrimination Act (ENDA):** In 2013, ENDA passed the Senate by a vote of 64-32 and Tsongas, a cosponsor of the bill, went to the House Floor to urge Speaker John Boehner to bring the bill to a vote, as she had done several times in the past. Her late husband Paul was the first U.S. Senator to introduce legislation to ban job discrimination based on sexual orientation. That was more than 30 years ago, in 1979. She agreed with him then and feels just as strongly about championing similar measures today. Almost directly after she was elected in 2007, she strongly supported the Employment Non-Discrimination Act spearheaded by her former colleague Barney Frank. She also supported the Baldwin Amendment, which would have added protections for gender identity saying, "we need to have the most comprehensive protections possible, and the Baldwin Amendment would make a good bill better." Tsongas also signed a letter encouraging President Obama to issue an executive order banning discrimination based on sexual orientation.
- **Founding the Congressional Equality Caucus:** Tsongas is one of the original, founding members of the Congressional Equality Caucus for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Americans. As a member of this caucus, she has advocated for the extension of equal rights, the repeal of

discriminatory laws, the elimination of hate-motivated violence, and the improved health and well-being for all, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity or expression.

- **Tsongas fights for the repeal of DOMA:** Tsongas joined her House colleagues in three “friend of the court” briefs challenging the constitutionality of the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA). She is an original cosponsor of the Respect for Marriage Act of 2011, which sought to repeal DOMA outright. She hailed the Supreme Court decision striking key provisions of DOMA: “Consenting individuals throughout the country, regardless of where they live, should have the ability to live an authentic life and have their monogamous, long-term relationships recognized and celebrated.”
- **Tsongas joins the President for Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell repeal:** Tsongas joined President Obama on December 22, 2010 at the White House as he signed into law the legislation that officially ended the military’s Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell policy. Tsongas had strongly advocated for the repeal since first being elected to Congress. She spoke on the House Floor in favor of repealing the policy, and as a member of the Armed Service Committee, helped ensure the provision doing so was included in the Fiscal Year 2011 annual defense bill.
- **Preventing discrimination in credit transactions:** Tsongas was an original cosponsor of legislation to prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity in all credit transactions – that means student loans, small business loans, mortgages, credit cards and more saying, “at a time when it has become painfully clear how important it is that individuals and businesses have access to credit, it’s vital that all applicants for credit will be considered based solely on their financial qualifications.”
- **Workplace fairness:** Tsongas was a cosponsor of the Equal Access to COBRA Act, H.R. 2310, which would change federal law to allow equal access to COBRA coverage for all individuals who are covered by an employer’s health plan, including domestic partners and their children.

Women's Rights:

- **Fighting for equal pay for equal work:** Tsongas is a cosponsor of the Paycheck Fairness Act, legislation which would help establish equal rights in the work place, thus eliminating the need for women to go to court in order to receive equal pay. Tsongas supports Equal Pay Day.
- **Preventing violence against women:** Tsongas spoke in support of reauthorizing the Violence Against Women Act and voted in favor of reauthorization, which ultimately passed in 2013. She is also a national leader on combating sexual assault in the military.
- **Equality in the military:** Tsongas has secured funding to develop gender-specific body armor for women in the military. She also strongly supported the removal of the ban on women serving in combat.

“As a Member of the House Armed Services Committee, and on visits to Iraq and Afghanistan, I have personally met with and heard testimony from countless female servicemembers. Servicewomen are every bit as dedicated to serving our nation as their male counterparts, and it is my firm belief that we must do everything we can to enable them to serve honorably and with distinction.” – *Congresswoman Niki Tsongas*

SUPPORTING SERVICEMEMBERS



Tsongas is a well-respected member of the House Armed Services Committee, and the Ranking Member (Top Democrat) of the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations. She is the Co-chair of the Military Sexual Assault Prevention Caucus. Tsongas is inspired by the Third District's strong, proud tradition of military service and her experiences growing up in a military family as she serves on behalf of our men and women in uniform. Below are examples of the numerous legislative and policy successes she has accomplished since taking office.

Supporting Massachusetts' military installations and defense sector

"U.S. Rep. Niki Tsongas highlighted the role industry can play in communicating information during a presentation to the Hanscom Representatives Association meeting at the Minuteman Commons June 27...During the meeting, Tsongas said she's an advocate for Hanscom AFB and other military installations in the area, and has invited senior leaders, such as the Air Force chief of staff to visit; however, she thinks industry has an important role to play too. She encouraged industry partners to share their experiences." *U.S. Rep. Tsongas encourages communication, By Patty Welsh, Hanscom AFB, June 30, 2014*

- **Tsongas brings high ranking military officials and members of the House Armed Services Committee to see Hanscom Air Force Base:**
Tsongas has been working to showcase the significance of Massachusetts' military installations by inviting high ranking members of Congress and military officials to come and see the innovative work being done here

firsthand.

Tsongas has and will continue to work tirelessly to ensure that Washington recognizes the innovative work that Massachusetts' military installations and research centers provide for the US military.

Below is a sample list of those Tsongas has invited and hosted at MA military facilities:

- **Rep. Mike Turner (R-OH):** At the Congresswoman's invitation, Rep. Mike Turner (R-OH), the Chairman of the House Armed Services Tactical Air and Land Forces Subcommittee (the Committee's largest subcommittee), visited Hanscom Air Force Base in August of 2014.

Rep. Turner said about the visit, "Since 2007, Congresswoman Tsongas and I have worked closely together in a substantive and bipartisan way to protect our servicemen and women. I was very grateful to Congresswoman Tsongas and to her community for welcoming me to Massachusetts. It was a pleasure to meet the men and women at Hanscom Air force Base and to see the incredibly sophisticated and forward-thinking work taking place at their facility. Congresswoman Tsongas and I will continue to build on our strong, bipartisan relationship as we work to find new ways for our communities to collaborate."

- **Rep. Adam Smith (D-WA):** The highest ranking Democrat on the House Armed Services Committee, Rep. Adam Smith (D-WA), visited at the Congresswoman's invitation in 2012.

"Tsongas was doing her job, getting an important member of a powerful committee to come and see a vital part of the Massachusetts economy and the U.S. military -- Hanscom -- and the high stakes involved if cuts aren't made on the basis of sound reasoning and strategic importance. And Smith was doing his job while a long way from home. We applaud their efforts, and hope Congressman Smith has a better understanding of Hanscom's leadership role in developing innovative defense technology and why it is so important to preserve and expand all base operations." – **Congressman Smith comes to Hanscom, The Lowell Sun editorial, September 30, 2012**

- **Top Military Leaders:** In November 2013, Congresswoman Tsongas invited **General Mark A. Welsh III**, Chief of Staff for the United States Air Force, to visit Hanscom Air Force Base and MIT Lincoln Labs. That same month, Congresswoman Tsongas hosted a meeting with Army Chief of Staff **General Raymond Odierno** at Natick Soldier Systems Center. During his visit, General Odierno noted that he sees a "bright future" for Natick.

“Welsh said he was impressed by what he saw during his visit to the Bay State. ‘It’s clear to me that Massachusetts is committed to an enduring partnership with its military bases and, specifically, its airmen,’ *said Welsh*. ‘I’m impressed by the collaboration demonstrated by leaders of government, industry, academia and other organizations, all of whom are focused on helping the Air Force and DOD more effectively meet our national security objectives.’” *Mass. shows its best defense, Lowell Sun by Lyle Moran, November 12, 2013*

- **Tsongas provision defending Hanscom AFB wins support of Republican House:** Hanscom Air Force Base has met critical communications, technology, and other security needs for our military for decades. The Air Force's mission at Hanscom is supported by the universities and innovative high-tech institutions that are unique to Massachusetts and the base is a substantial economic driver in our region. Tsongas authored legislation which states that the Air Force cannot diminish Hanscom’s capabilities or its important work without Congressional approval; the first step in protecting Hanscom’s mission going forward. Tsongas was also successful in including a provision in the FY 2013 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) and language in the House-passed version of the FY 2015 NDAA that would encourage the highly successful partnership between MIT’s Lincoln Labs and Hanscom AFB to continue by allowing a \$450 million modernization project to move forward.

“To her credit, Tsongas is getting the attention of top military brass and extolling Massachusetts exceptionalism. As the state's lone member of the powerful House Armed Services Committee, the Lowell Democrat is staying ahead of the curve on military restructuring that could impact her home state.” – *Tsongas fights to keep military bases in MA, The Lowell Sun editorial, December 2, 2013*

- **Helped secure funding for new middle school and new dormitory at Hanscom AFB:** In June 2014, construction crews broke ground on a brand new, state of the art, middle school at Hanscom Air Force base. The \$34 million, 85,000-square-foot facility will accommodate more than 300 fourth-through-eighth-graders. Congresswoman Tsongas, in her position on the House Armed Services Committee, was vital in securing funding for the project to replace the existing 1950’s building which had recently failed inspection. Tsongas also supported funding for a \$13.5 million construction project at Hanscom AFB for a new dormitory for junior enlisted airmen, which will increase housing options and provide modern, on-base accommodations. These crucial investments signal the DOD’s continued support for the families of servicemembers at the base and the vital role Hanscom AFB plays in our national defense.

- **Champion of JSTARS funding which maintains Hanscom's core mission:** Congresswoman Tsongas has championed the Joint Surveillance Target Attack Radar System (JSTARS) recapitalization program. JSTARS has become one of the most reliable surveillance systems in the world, providing unparalleled reconnaissance resources and efficient communications capabilities. It was one of Hanscom's largest development programs in the 1990s, and the new recap program, which will be headquartered at Hanscom, will continue to be one of the base's largest programs. At Tsongas's request, the House-passed versions of the FY2015 National Defense Authorization Act and Defense Appropriations bill include the full \$73 million in funding needed to move forward with the JSTARS recap program.
- **After seeing it firsthand in Afghanistan, Tsongas is one of BACN's strongest advocates:** The Battlefield Airborne Communications Node (BACN), which is managed at Hanscom, has been heralded as an outstanding industry breakthrough. It is a critical communications tool that helps servicemembers communicate in remote locations around the world. At the Congresswoman's request, the FY15 NDAA secures BACN's place in our military future, recognizing its role as an important and necessary resource for soldier communication and safety by making BACN a permanent Air Force program, with a guaranteed funding stream.
- **Tsongas introduces bill focused on improving and streamlining military cyber technologies:** In April 2014, Congresswoman Tsongas, along with Congressman Derek Kilmer (D-WA), introduced the DOD Cyber/ IT Range Act. As of 2012, there were more than 60 ranges operating under DOD. This legislation would require the DOD to make specific improvements to the way cyber and Information Technology test range facilities are managed across the department. As the DOD and the services increase capacity and utilization of their cyber and IT ranges, it is critical that the department coordinate the use of these ranges and remove redundancies that waste tax dollars. Hanscom AFB's C4ISR Enterprise Integration Facility (CEIF) is one of the DOD's major cyber range knowledge centers and stands to benefit from the sharing and coordination laid out in this legislation, with the potential for the CEIF to be further used to coordinate interaction with other facilities.
- **Tsongas introduces the DOD Cloud Security Act:** In April 2014, Congresswoman Tsongas introduced the Department of Defense Cloud Security Act. DOD personnel deal with millions of unclassified and so-

called “sensitive but unclassified” documents, and countless quantities of data. Storing benign information on internal DOD servers is an increasingly large expense, particularly given the widespread availability of secure, fast, reliable, and affordable storage services utilized in the private sector. Advancements in cloud data storage by commercial sector vendors have enabled other federal government agencies, including those dealing with sensitive information, to store data at a fraction of the cost of physical data centers. The Congresswoman’s bill will ensure that the Department of Defense establishes its own security requirements for cloud storage in a timely fashion in order to give vendors the opportunity to meet those standards. The Congresswoman consulted closely with Hanscom leadership on this issue as she crafted this legislation. This bill will support operations at Hanscom AFB’s C4ISR Enterprise Integration Facility (CEIF) - a facility designed to realistically test and integrate advanced software, cyber and network applications - potentially opening up cost savings measures, private sector opportunities and job growth.

- **Laboratory Authority for Breakthrough Scientific (LABS) Research Act:** The House-passed FY15 NDAA includes the Laboratory Authority for Breakthrough Scientific (LABS) Research Act, introduced by Rep. Tsongas, which encourages the elimination of bureaucratic restrictions that currently prevent DOD engineers, scientists, and other technical personnel from being able to share research, learn about cutting edge innovations, and interact with their peers from across the country and the world at technical conferences and symposia.
- **Tsongas working to maintain critical DOD wide food research program, saving jobs:** The Combat Feeding Directorate at Natick Soldier Systems Center is the primary organization conducting research, development, integration, testing, and engineering for combat rations, field food service equipment and complete combat feeding systems for the Department of Defense and interagency partners like NASA. As a result of Tsongas’s persistent advocacy, severe cuts to this program were reversed in the House-passed FY15 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), taking a major step forward in preserving this critical mission, which supports over 100 jobs in Massachusetts.

Improving body armor

- **Tsongas efforts triple funding for new, safer body armor:** Since coming to Congress, Niki Tsongas has pushed for the development of safer, lighter-weight, gender specific and better fitting body armor for our troops in the field. She championed a law in 2009 to ensure a more dedicated stream of funding for body armor research. Heavy body armor is the cause of many injuries for our servicemen and women and at times causes servicemembers to remove their armor while on the battlefield, putting our military members at further risk while deployed. Her efforts helped lead to the tripling of the financial commitment to body armor research and development signed into law in 2012. Additionally, at Tsongas's request, the FY 2014 NDAA requires the Secretary of Defense to submit a comprehensive research and development strategy for achieving significant weight reductions (20% or more) for both hard and soft body armor to the congressional defense committees. Much of this research and development, funded by the legislation she championed, is happening right here in Massachusetts through collaboration between Natick Soldier Systems Center and UMass Lowell's Emerging Technologies and Innovation Center.

“As modern warfare evolves, the need to reconcile strength, safety and mobility becomes more important. Sergeant, major or colonel would agree a key step is to continue improving body armor and by doing so, optimize his – and her — ability to shoot, move and communicate.”

Time: Making All Our Troops Bulletproof, October 22, 2012 by Niki Tsongas

- **Tsongas legislation secures first-ever funding for development of female body armor:** During an Armed Services Committee hearing, Congresswoman Tsongas pushed the Services to develop body armor specifically for female soldiers – which previously did not exist. Fourteen percent of the U.S. military is now female, a figure that is expected to rise to 25% by 2025, and women are already seeing their roles in combat expanding further. Tsongas subsequently introduced legislation to ensure that female soldiers will be provided the same level of protection as their male counterparts by directing the development of gender specific body armor to ensure that this life saving technology properly fits and protects all of our servicemembers.

“An anti-war representative from Massachusetts has become a champion of lightweight body armor for soldiers, which particularly helps women... Tsongas persuaded her House colleagues this month to include a provision in the annual defense authorization bill directing the secretary of the Army to assess the need for new body armor designed specifically for female soldiers and also to endorse President Obama's budget request to triple funding for improved body

armor...The fiscal 2011 defense bill, at Tsongas's urging, required a study of the feasibility of lightweight body armor and also ordered the Defense Department to centralize all its research and procurement efforts to avoid duplication by each of the services. In 2009, a provision authored by Tsongas established individual budget line items for research and procurement of body armor to allow for better congressional oversight." – *CQ: Heavy Price for Heavy Armor, May 29, 2012 by Shawn Zeller*

Combating military sexual assault

Tsongas is a recognized national leader for her efforts to prevent sexual assault in the military and to provide victims of this crime with new rights and greater legal protections. Studies have revealed that as many as 1 in 4 women leaving military service report that they have experienced some form of Military Sexual Trauma (MST). By the Pentagon's own estimate as few as 13.5% of sexual assaults are reported. She has authored historic legislation that has been passed into law in recent years as part of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), which sets policy for the Department of Defense.

"Much of the public credit for the historic changes to how the Pentagon deals with sexual assault has recently gone to more high-profile senators...But nearly all of the new laws enacted in recent years... are the result of the quiet diligence of [Mike] Turner and [Niki] Tsongas." - *For Tsongas and GOP colleague, a long fight on military sexual assault, by Bryan Bender, The Boston Globe, December 27, 2013*

- **Tsongas' historic changes combat military sexual assault:** The significant and historic changes authored by Tsongas prevent and combat military sexual assault, support survivors and work to eradicate the cultural flaws in the military that have allowed these crimes to occur for too long. She has worked successfully across-the-aisle for years to make bipartisan reform a reality.

Below is a list of just some of the historic changes Tsongas-authored legislation has made in recent years (for a full list visit <http://tsongas.house.gov/military-sexual-trauma>)

- For the first time in decades, the role of a commander was significantly changed – removing a commander's ability to change or dismiss a conviction by a jury, and limits the commander's ability to change a sentencing decision.
- Survivors were granted the right to a base transfer, and commanders directed to consider transferring the perpetrator if the victim prefers to

remain with his / her unit.

- Survivors were granted the right to legal counsel, the right to confidentiality when seeking assistance from an advocate.
- Mandated those who are convicted of sexual assault will absolutely be discharged or dismissed.
- Eliminated a bias in the military justice system by limiting the use of the “good soldier” defense, which allows a defendant to cite unrelated, subjective factors during trial.
- Increased accountability by requiring that commanders be assessed on their ability to create a climate where a victim can report a crime without fear of retaliation, and requiring that commanders and servicemembers be assessed on their support of sexual assault prevention and response policies.
- Created an independent review panel comprised of civilian and military members that closely examined the way that the DOD investigates, prosecutes, and adjudicates sexual assault and related offenses (the panel concluded its investigation in the summer of 2014).
- Greater training for sexual assault prevention at every level of the Armed Services was mandated.
- More leadership and accountability as a two star general is put in charge of the DOD Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office.
- Strengthened the investigative and oversight tools for preventing sexual assault in the military.
- Put in place processes that protect servicemembers against retaliatory gestures and intimidation techniques, such as the ability to correct their military records if they have experienced sexual harassment or sexual assault.

“...she has emerged as one of a handful of legislators who have successfully pushed the military to end years of denial about sexual assault in the military. To be sure, progress has come in fits and starts. But for perhaps the first time, empty excuses and promises to do better are not enough. As someone who grew up as an Air Force brat, Tsongas comes by her interest in the

military honestly. She has served on the Armed Services Committee since she was elected to replace Marty Meehan in 2007.” – *Taking arms against sexual assault, by Adrian Walker, The Boston Globe, June 26, 2013*

- **Military Sexual Assault Prevention Caucus:** Tsongas co-chairs the Military Sexual Assault Prevention Caucus in the House of Representatives, along with Rep. Mike Turner (R-OH). Soon after its formation, in April 2012, then Defense Secretary Leon Panetta and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Martin Dempsey made an unprecedented visit to Capitol Hill to meet with the Caucus – validating the Caucus’s efforts – and announce a series of new initiatives designed to combat sexual assault in the military. In a rare example of bipartisan partnership, Tsongas and Turner have successfully championed many new policies which are now law and are seen as essential in changing the culture of the services and will better protect victims and hold perpetrators accountable.

“In 2012, Tsongas established the Military Sexual Assault Prevention Caucus with Representative Mike Turner, an Ohio Republican. The two put provisions in the National Defense Authorization Act to create an independent panel to examine the Pentagon’s response to sexual assaults, require better reporting, and create a special victims unit within the military justice system. Affleck may have been robbed, but the “The Invisible War” and Tsongas’ work on the issue are both worthy of a gold statue.” – *Niki Tsongas ready for her close-up, The Boston Globe editorial, January 21, 2013*

- **A national voice – Tsongas Op-Eds on MST run in major publications:** As author and co-author of numerous pieces of legislation signed into law combating sexual assault in the military, Tsongas has become a leading national voice on this topic. She has penned several opinion pieces picked up and published by leading national publications, including US News & World Report, the Huffington Post and the Christian Science Monitor.

“In 2009, the Department of Defense released an alarming report on sexual assault in the military that was largely ignored by the media and military brass alike. Four years later, after a shocking documentary and a string of high-profile incidents where military commanders and supervisors abused their authority or allegedly committed the crimes they swore to protect against, everyone is paying attention.” - *Ending a Culture of Willful Denial, US News & World Report, July 18, 2013* by Niki Tsongas, Claire McCaskill, Susan Collins, Michael Turner. Read full OpEds at: www.tsongas.house.gov/op-eds

Military Personnel Health Care & Services

- **Tsongas introduces bill aimed at tracking and preventing military suicides:** In 2014, Congresswoman Tsongas introduced the DOD Suicide

Tracking Act. Passed by the House of Representatives, this bill will provide much-needed tools to better track and assess suicides by servicemembers and their family members. The DOD Suicide Tracking Act requires the DOD to establish a standardized suicide tracking policy for the Guard and Reserves, and requires each service to develop a process to track, retain and assess suicide data for military family members. The Suicide Tracking Act will provide crucial data for the DOD to more accurately assess the issues as well as help to establish effective prevention and support programs.

- **Improving National Guard and Reserve members access to health care:** The FY 2010 Defense Authorization Act enacted into law included a provision authored by Tsongas to increase earlier access to military health coverage (TRICARE) for National Guard and reservists who are called up to active duty from the current 90 days to 180 days. This change would provide additional time for servicemembers to seek needed medical care, schedule minor surgeries, or resolve other conditions that could easily be addressed given enough lead time.
- **Supporting the National Guard and Reserves health care professionals:** Bipartisan legislation which Tsongas introduced to help aid the recruitment and retention of skilled health care professionals in the National Guard and Reserves became law as part of the FY 09 Defense Authorization Bill. The new law raises the loan repayment ceiling for benefits available to those doctors, dentists, and other health care professionals currently in the Guard and Reserves, and to those considering such a career, so that they are competitive with similar repayment programs in both the private sector and active duty military. This legislation has a direct impact on this region since a National Guard medical unit is stationed in Methuen.
- **Charles Dick Medal of Merit:** In recognition of her work on behalf of the National Guard and Reserve members, Congresswoman Niki Tsongas was awarded the Charles Dick Medal of Merit in 2010.

When he presented her with the award, the Massachusetts Adjutant General said, "The MG Charles Dick Medal of Merit honors those who provide the legislative leadership that enables National Guard soldiers and airmen to meet their mission. Congresswoman Niki Tsongas' legislative agenda honors National Guard service by providing for health care at home; personal safety while at war; and dignity in retirement. I am honored to join the National Guard Association of the United States and the National Guard Association of Massachusetts in honoring her tireless and substantive support for America's citizen Soldiers."

- **Assessing the mental health of UAV operators:** Tsongas successfully included a provision in the House-passed FY 2013 National Defense Authorization Act encouraging all the services to perform mental health assessments of their drone operators. While drones have changed the nature of war and protect operators by keeping them off of the front lines, concerns have been raised about the mental health impact of sustained missions on operators.

Veterans

- **Creates Veterans Advisory Committee:** Soon after her election to Congress, Tsongas formed a Veterans Advisory Committee, which brings together local veterans, military families, elected leaders, veterans' agents, and other veterans care representatives to identify ways to better serve District veterans and their families. Tsongas consults with members of the Advisory Committee when crafting legislation to assist veterans, such as the PTSD bills that she introduced in 2008 and legislation to accelerate the development of lighter weight body armor.
- **iVets bill to optimize vet records system:** Tsongas introduced the Improving Veterans' Electronic Transition Services Act (iVETS Act), which encouraged the Department of Defense and the Department of Veterans Affairs to create an internet based portal for veterans to access their records and benefits information electronically. Veterans and their families have repeatedly expressed frustration with the cumbersome process they have to go through in order to transfer their military records and benefit information from military to civilian life. In response to this legislation, the Department of Veterans Affairs enhanced their legacy eBenefits web portal to allow veterans to use it to access their Official Military Personnel File.
- **Tsongas initiative to help military service members married to foreign spouses access their tax rebate becomes law:** After *Stars and Stripes* and other organizations began reporting that servicemembers married to foreign spouses were ineligible to receive 2008 stimulus checks because of a provision intended to prevent illegal immigrants from receiving checks, Tsongas spear-headed a joint letter from House members to the Chairman of the Ways and Means Committee requesting that the glitch be addressed. Her remedy was included in the Heroes Earnings Assistance and Relief Tax Act of 2008 which became law on June 17, 2008.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS



- **Tsongas visits troops in Iraq:** Tsongas has made two visits to Iraq since being elected. In 2009, she led a Congressional Delegation trip to Afghanistan and Iraq to visit with American servicemen and women as well as top U.S. generals, ambassadors, and local officials.
- **Trips to Afghanistan to meet with U.S./Afghan officials:** Tsongas has made 6 trips to Afghanistan since taking office. Tsongas has met with all of the top U.S. military officials in Afghanistan, top Afghan military and defense officials, elected officials and community leaders.
- **Protecting the gains of Afghan women:** Tsongas is the co-chair of the Afghan Women’s Caucus. She believes one of the greatest success stories of America’s presence in Afghanistan is the unprecedented gains that have been made by Afghan women. On her visits to Afghanistan, Tsongas has met with women leaders in Afghanistan, including women Parliamentarians, business owners and journalists. She has penned numerous OpEd pieces for national publications urging the U.S. military and diplomatic corps to maintain policies that protect the gains made and prevent backsliding. She has authored legislation that directs funding and supports U.S. efforts to protect the opportunities and human rights of Afghan women and girls.

“Afghan women know the fight is far from over. But every time a young girl reads a book in public, a woman walks out of a voting booth, or a female journalist pens a story critical of the

government, the country continues to move forward – and the rest of the world moves with them.” – *Afghanistan’s success will be measured by women’s progress*, *TIME*, June 24, 2014, by Niki Tsongas, Martha Roby, Renee Ellmers, Susan Davis, Cheri Bustos - read the full OpEds from TIME & CNN at: www.tsongas.house.gov/op-eds

- **Tsongas makes local connection in Cambodia:** In 2012, Tsongas led a visit to Cambodia at no charge to taxpayers. Lowell has the second-highest Cambodian-American population in the country, with approximately one-fifth of the population tracing their heritage back to southeastern Asia. Tsongas visited Cambodia to better understand the history that has shaped the culture for Cambodia-Americans and explore ways to further strengthen ties between the two countries. Tsongas met with Cambodian political, business and nonprofit leaders and discussed how our nations can learn from and benefit each other.
- **Greece & Hellenic Caucus:** Tsongas is a proud member of the Congressional Hellenic Caucus, which has played a key role in bringing initiatives of significance to the Greek-American community to Congress’ attention. She meets on a regular basis with representatives from Greece and Cyprus, including the Ambassadors, along with Hellenic-American advocacy groups. Tsongas has supported a variety of initiatives in support of Greece and the Hellenic region, including cosponsoring legislation and signing letters to the President and Secretary of State encouraging U.S. leadership in the negotiation for a just solution on Cyprus. In addition, she has supported legislation that would enable U.S. citizens who own property in the Turkish-occupied Cyprus territory to seek financial restitution with the current inhabitants of their land or the Turkish government. She was also an original cosponsor of a resolution that expresses Congress’ belief that the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the UN and Greece should find a "compromise composite name with a clear geographic qualifier, e.g. Northern Macedonia," for all international uses. She visited with the Ecumenical Patriarchate during his visit to the United States in October of 2009 and is a cosponsor of legislation urging Turkey to respect the rights and religious freedoms of the Ecumenical Patriarchate.