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By Dave Eisenstadter

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Charles F. Bass, back in the U.S. House after four years in the private sector, made stops in Keene Thursday to meet with businesses large and small.

Bass, a Republican who served as a U.S. congressman for 12 years prior to being defeated in 2006, recently helped to pass a provision that would strip \$60 billion from the remainder of the 2010 federal budget.

Bass tried and failed to add an amendment which would have supplied \$50 million for a home heating assistance program, but the amendment was defeated. He also supported an amendment that restored about \$500 million to special education funding, bringing it to the level it was funded at last year.

"That has a direct impact on local school districts," Bass said, of special education aid. Without it, districts have to raise the money themselves using local taxes, said.

Bass believes federal-level cuts are the solution to dealing with rising debts the federal government is incurring, he said.

Bass said he supports New Hampshire Democratic Sen. Jeanne Shaheen's bill to make the federal budgeting process more like New Hampshire's, with a two-year budget instead of an annual budget. He pitched a similar bill in the 1990s, he said. The problem he faced then was that certain committees, including the finance committee, disagreed with him, he said.

Bass recently went against the majority of his party with a vote to preserve funding for Title 10 programs, which include Planned Parenthood. Bass was one of seven House Republicans to vote that way, but was on the losing side.

"Title 10 does a lot of important functions to protect the health of young women in our society and I didn't think it was appropriate to cut that fund to zero," Bass said.

Bass, who worked in energy companies across New Hampshire during his time away from Congress, supports passing an energy bill that would support nuclear development, offshore oil drilling and developing alternative energy, such as biomass, wind and solar.

"Every citizen of this state should have as a priority supporting energy or energy technology that originates here in New Hampshire," Bass said.

Bass made stops Thursday at Janos Technology and the Hannah Grimes Center in Keene.