

Untitled document

By Jay Hobson

*The Salem Community Patriot, March 4, 2011*

Republican Congressman Charlie Bass met with constituents from the 2nd Congressional District at the Knightly Meeting room at Salem's town hall from 11 a.m. to noon on Saturday to answer their questions and address any concerns.

Healthcare, the nation's budget deficit, and global warming were a few of the concerns raised by the 50 or so residents in attendance.

"This is not going to be an hour of me pontificating—it's for you. I want to be here and I want to solve problems," Bass said before opening the question-and-answer format.

Regarding healthcare reform, Bass said that the former system of employer-based healthcare benefits was "not the right approach" and that healthcare "should be universally deductible for everybody."

"We need meaningful, practical tort reform and we need to support community health care centers," Bass said.

A woman who identified herself as "Charlotte from Amherst" said she was "panicky" because of global warming.

"I lie awake in bed at night in a panic and I can't sleep. We need to do something about global warming," Charlotte said.

Jessica O'Hare, a program associate at Environment New Hampshire in Concord, read from a pre-typed slip of paper stating that she realized "you [Bass] have to make tough decisions, but the EPA protects public health."

"I don't believe the EPA as an agency should have command and control authority to implement a piece of legislation that failed in Congress over the last two years," Bass said. Bass is a member of the House Energy and Commerce Committee.

Andy Bridge, also from Amherst, said his main concern was the \$14 trillion national debt.

"We began work on the debt by cutting \$61 billion, but it's going to take more in the future," Bass said.

Bass announced the opening in March of a district office in Salem.

"Because of budget constraints, the office will be open a couple of days a week and will cover Salem, Windham, and Atkinson," Bass said.

