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By Jake O'Donnell

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U.S. Congressman Charles Bass (R-N.H.) was all over Salem Tuesday talking economic recovery and market uncertainty with voters.

Bass told reporters at the Ingram Senior Center that America is no different a country because Standard and Poor's downgraded the country's credit rating.

"We have to get people back to work, we have to get the unemployment rate down and we need to get our spending under control," Bass said.

He said the process starts with the debt limit extension compromise bill passed by the Congress last week, a bill Bass supported.

"Moving forward in September we need to pivot into job creation and making our employers competitive with those around the world," Bass said. "America has been in a turnaround situation for a while now. Two years ago the nation's debt as a percent of gross domestic product was around 40 percent. Now it's around 80."

Bass, who was elected to his seventh term in Congress last fall after spending four years away from Washington, first stopped at the Nashua National Fish Hatchery in Nashua before a full afternoon slate of stops in Salem.

He arrived at the Senior Center at noon where he met with numerous seniors to discuss national issues. Bass took away people's concerns about the markets and overall economy.

"It's important for someone like me to just be here and listen," Bass said.

Bass said the economy's problems didn't happen overnight and won't be fixed overnight, either.

"(The credit downgrade) is one of many indicators that we're in a workout world right now for America," Bass said. "When I decided to get back into public life last year this is what it's all about. People are asking me to make the tough decisions to save America."

Bass later visited Salem Town Hall where he met with a number of town officials and spoke with them about potential future grant funding for the next phase of work on Haigh Avenue near Interstate 93, which was evacuated during the May 2006 floods.

Bass was scheduled to visit all three fire stations in town as well as the N.H. Employment Security Office on South Broadway and the Public Works Department.