



Rep. Budzinski Says She Is Proud To Stand With Granite City Works And Workers In General

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
January 29 2024 11:49 AM

U.S. Rep. Nikki Budzinski (IL-13) recently visited [Riverbender.com](https://riverbender.com) and appeared on [Our Daily Show! with CJ Nasello](#) and an interview with the content director. This is one of a multi-part series about the interview.

ALTON - Throughout her time in Congress, U.S. Rep. Nikki Budzinski has proudly held her “Standing With Workers” philosophy. One specific area is her efforts to help offset the recent layoffs by U.S. Steel at the Granite City Works plant.



“Too often, companies close down or initiate layoffs without giving their workers or the broader community proper notice,” she said. “Workers and their families deserve better than a last-minute email letting them know they’re losing their jobs.

"When U.S. Steel tried to use a legal loophole to avoid providing advance layoff notice to 400 Granite City Works employees, I worked with Governor Pritzker to secure an investigation by the Illinois Department of Labor. After calling the company out for their actions, they agreed to provide the impacted workers with additional support.

"I also introduced the Fair Warning Act to strengthen advance notice requirements and ensure that companies are treating working people with the dignity and respect they deserve.”

One of Budzinski’s top focuses now is helping create new pathways to good-paying, 21st-century jobs.

“That’s why the very first piece of legislation I introduced is the LEAP Act – a bipartisan bill to help fill the job skills gap by providing tax credits to small businesses that hire apprenticeship employees,” she said. “Not only would this bill help to get folks

ready for careers in growing industries, but it also supports local businesses by addressing the need for more qualified workers and easing the costs of training job seekers – challenges I hear about from employers across our region.

“I have also heard time and time again how the upfront cost of purchasing tools is a barrier for too many folks interested in entering the building trades. We need to make sure that these highly-skilled men and women can afford the equipment they need to succeed. That’s why I introduced the bipartisan Tools Tax Deduction Act to allow apprenticeship employees and construction workers to write off the expense of the tools and equipment required for their profession.”

Rep. Budzinski also pointed out there are a number of advantages to having steel plants in the Alton-Granite City region, especially with such successful port and rail systems here.

Her hope is the federal government will provide grants to companies like the steel plant in Granite City and continue to invest in them so they will rebound and be successful in the future.

“Granite City also has some of the most highly skilled workforce in the country,” she said. “America having a successful steel industry is a real key to our future.”