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## Republican presidential candidate Duncan Hunter makes a pitch for a strong defense

### In Keene, he embraces conservative views

By **Jake Berry**  
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The basic difference between Democrats and Republicans lies in the interpretation of how they view government, according to presidential hopeful Duncan Hunter.

"Democrats often say America is great because of what government does for people," Hunter, a Republican Congressman from California, told an audience of about 35 at Keene State College Monday morning. "Republicans say America is great because of what free people do for themselves."

That's why, if elected, Hunter would make sure people are free to support themselves in business, in school and in their everyday lives, he told the crowd at the first in the college's series of presidential forums, co-sponsored by Keene State and the Greater Keene Chamber of Commerce.

Hunter, who was first elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1980, said he would ensure Americans are free from the terrorists who are looking to cause them harm.

"We need to increase defense spending," he said Monday. "We live in a dangerous world. ... We want to be strong enough to deter anybody from attacking us."

He also wants to shut out any illegal immigrants looking to enter through the Mexican border.

"If I'm president, I'll have (a) border fence up in six months," he said. "We have to know who's coming into this country, and we have to know what they're bringing with them."

And he wants to free the country, he said, from the regulations that make it difficult for small businesses to grow.

The country's strict business regulations are forcing many manufacturing jobs overseas, Hunter said, resulting in the loss of many good business opportunities for American workers.

"We need to have a regulatory industry that's consumer-friendly," he said. "If we don't do that, we'll suffocate."

Americans are already beginning to lose air, Hunter said. With rising health-care costs, a failing Social Security system, and high college tuition costs, Americans are being priced out of their means, he said.

In order to preserve money for American families and businesses, Hunter said he would renew President Bush's tax cuts, and he would look to lower rates for the estate tax.

"Why should death be a taxable event?" he asked the crowd.

To combat health-care costs, he would allow residents to pursue lower prices by buying insurance coverage across state lines.

Some members of the audience said they appreciated Hunter's openness and candor.

He "was very open about his views, and very responsive to questions," said William O'Meara, chairman-elect of the chamber of commerce, which sponsored the event.

But others weren't as satisfied.

"To me it seemed that he was closing off the country a little bit," said Joslin Kimball Frank, referring to Hunter's views on foreign policy and trade. "Feels to me like a closed community."

Harrisville resident David H. Blair agreed.

"He talks a lot about national defense, and protecting our interests," Blair said. "I'd like to hear a candidate talk about national interest in terms of what's best about this country. Not just how to defend it."

