

Happy one-year anniversary of what President Obama and Vice President Biden referred to as the "recovery summer." For most Americans, the impact of the "great recession," which supposedly ended last year, is continued high unemployment. By that measure, the administration has not accomplished its goals of putting the nation back to work. After spending over a trillion dollars on failed stimulus, the White House doesn't appear to have a plan B, but House conservatives do.

The numbers tell it all. More than two years after the passage of Mr. Obama's stimulus package – which promised to keep national unemployment under 8 percent – the national jobless rate is 9.1 percent. In fact, unemployment has remained at 8 percent or above for 28 straight months. This is the longest such period of high unemployment since the Great Depression.

Here in Alabama, jobless claims jumped to 9.6 percent in May – up from 9.3 percent in April. Across southwest Alabama, new hiring is also stagnant, although we've recently heard announcements of new jobs coming to Clarke and Washington counties. There is also reason to be optimistic locally, as the summer tourist season is already showing signs of a rebound from last year's catastrophic oil spill when beach goers largely avoided the Gulf Coast.

Even with these positive local trends, the state and national outlook is still pretty bleak. The Bureau of Labor Statistics is reporting that it's taking Americans ten months on average to find a job – again, the longest since the Great Depression. And with summer already here, the prospect for part-time jobs for those age 16 to 19 is not good. Youth unemployment has remained at 24 percent for two years in a row.

Given these facts, it should be clear to most everyone that the path taken by the White House to spend our way out of the recession has failed miserably. Rather than laying a foundation for an economic recovery, the \$1.1 trillion spent by the administration on so-called shovel-ready projects has done little more than add to the country's massive debt.

With no plan B to jumpstart the struggling economy, the administration appears to be approaching the job crisis in the same manner it is dealing with the country's mounting debt crisis – denial. In recent weeks, the president has joked about the failure of his stimulus and the head of his political party has even claimed that the economy is turning around. Americans are

looking to their leaders in Washington for leadership and solutions – not shrugs and mistruths.

Many believe, as I do, that the best way to return this country to sound economic footing is by removing barriers to new job creation, like the threat of tax hikes to finance runaway government spending, excessive regulations on small business and the uncertainty over high energy costs.

Perception goes a long way in this economy. The feeling of the country's employers is to hold back on expanding and hiring, believing our mountainous national debt will surely lead to sharply higher taxes. The Obama administration could allay those concerns if it will only work with conservatives in the House to pass a long-term budget that will rein in federal spending and make serious debt payments.

House Republicans have already laid a serious plan on the table. The "Path to Prosperity" budget, which passed the House in April, slows the growth of government spending by \$6 trillion and lowers the deficit by \$4 trillion over a decade. Our budget also begins a discussion about the future of Medicare and we offer a plan to save it. So far, the president has no plan of his own.

House Republicans have also passed a series of energy bills this year aimed at restarting domestic oil and gas drilling that was put on hold by the Obama administration. Unfortunately, the Senate has not voted on them. A balanced energy policy that promotes both responsible and safe domestic energy development and alternative energy research is a sound way to lift the veil of uncertainty that surrounds our energy-driven economy.

House Republicans have also begun the process of reviewing costly and burdensome federal regulations, which often prove a substantial obstacle to business growth and job creation. Federal red tape must be reviewed by Congress and lawmakers should have the final say, not faceless, unelected and unaccountable bureaucrats.

These are but a few of the steps conservatives in the House – both Republicans and many Democrats – have already taken to help restore confidence in our economy and usher in new job creation. It's not too late for the president and the U.S. Senate to join us by launching a real recovery summer to help put Americans back to work.

My staff and I work for you. If we can ever be of service, do not hesitate to call my office toll free at 1-800-288-8721.