

Last Thursday night, President Obama addressed a joint session of Congress to unveil his latest plan to reinvigorate the economy and grow jobs. His remarks called upon all Americans to work together to overcome these tough economic times. America's prosperity is not a partisan issue. We all want our country to succeed and we all want better times for everyone. The question is, how do we get there?

While Congress is ready to sit at the table with the president to craft a jobs plan, we simply cannot give a blank check to more massive government spending. As we have learned after three years of largely ineffective and poorly directed Washington stimulus, government can best lead by getting out of the way of jobs creators.

The president offered a mixture of old and new initiatives in his jobs speech. I listened intently with the hope of hearing some bold ideas to rekindle economic growth. I did hear some positive suggestions, including tax breaks for small business and tax reductions for wage earners. Another was the president's own admission that his government regulations are weighing down many businesses and smothering economic growth. These are areas of common ground that Congress and the president should pursue in a jobs program.

In fact, if you have been reading my columns over the past months, you have already heard about House Republican efforts to review and roll back costly government regulations, many of which are coming from the Environmental Protection Agency. What the president has been unable to accomplish through his failed Cap and Trade energy legislation he has attempted to implement via the EPA. If his ultimate goal is to put more Americans to work, hamstringing business with new red tape makes about as much sense as raising taxes. It has the same effect of depressing economic activity. If the president is truly ready to roll back regulation, he will find a receptive audience in the House.

The president's proposal to provide tax breaks for businesses who hire new employees, as well as continued payroll tax reductions for workers is another area where Congress can work toward agreement. Where we part company is the president's insistence upon tax increases for those who provide the resources to employ Americans and invest in economic growth. As I have stated before, the middle of an economic downturn is not the appropriate time to raise taxes.

I was also disappointed to hear the president propose additional government spending for a wide variety of construction projects like weatherization and "green" upgrades that are not likely to stimulate long-term employment. During the previous Democrat-led Congress, President Obama was given a green light to experiment with a host of government spending programs. The result was nearly \$1 trillion in so-called stimulus projects which did little more than grow the federal debt.

If this massive amount of federal stimulus did not ramp up job creation – as the president originally promised – then why would hundreds of billions of more such spending make any difference now? I voted against the president's failed stimulus back then, and I oppose this plan to borrow and spend more money with no guarantee of results.

The president tried to add a little sugar to his bitter stimulus prescription by suggesting that his new spending would be paid for. But instead of offering an offset, he simply passed the buck to Congress to make the cuts elsewhere in the budget. That is not leadership.

The American people want solutions, not more promises that help is on the way. Too many individuals in South Alabama remain out of work or worry that their job may be cut next.

The House has already approved bills aimed at jumpstarting job creation. This year, we passed legislation to resume domestic oil drilling that has been put on hold by the Obama administration. This step would help restore energy-related jobs in the Gulf region and ease gas prices. Unfortunately, the Democrat-led Senate has failed to pass this legislation. The House has already voiced support for broad-based tax reform to encourage investment, and as noted before, we've called for a review and roll back of federal regulations which hinder business and discourage hiring.

While the country and Washington may be politically divided, one thing all Americans can agree on is far too many people are out of work and our economy remains in trouble.

I look forward to reviewing the president's proposal in detail when it is received in the House, and to working with he and my colleagues in Congress on common sense proposals that move our country forward without adding to our mountain of debt.

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.

For Release: September 12, 2011