

The old cynical line "Do as I say, not as I do" was dusted off and made official White House policy last week when President Obama announced that his administration would not approve a permit for a new energy pipeline from Canada to the United States, effectively stalling the creation of tens of thousands of new American jobs.

In his January 2010 State of the Union address, President Obama said jobs would be his top priority: "But I realize that for every success story, there are other stories of men and women who wake up with the anguish of not knowing where their next paycheck will come from; who send out resumes week after week and hear nothing in response. That is why jobs must be our number-one focus..."

When it comes to jobs – especially energy jobs – this administration has adopted a double standard. From placing further restrictions on new energy exploration off the American coastline, to foot-dragging the approval of oil drilling in the Gulf, the White House has made no secret that lost fossil fuel energy jobs are of little concern. In contrast, President Obama has given priority to so-called green energy job creation, which, so far, has netted little gain for American workers. In one example, the administration poured more than half a billion dollars into Solyndra, a failed California solar company that eventually closed its doors, laying off over a thousand workers.

The president's decision to deny a permit to build the Keystone XL oil pipeline is a double loss for America. The tens of thousands of construction jobs that would have been created from the Canadian border to the Gulf of Mexico will be mothballed. Secondly, the United States is turning its back on energy access from our closest and most dependable ally, Canada. With unfriendly and unstable regimes controlling significant portions of the world's energy supply, America cannot afford to forfeit access to reliable Canadian oil.

President Obama may have angered many Americans with his decision, but surely his action prompted smiles in Beijing. Also a major consumer of foreign oil to fuel its economic expansion, China is a likely buyer of any Canadian oil that America refuses. Canada is reported to be considering construction of an alternative pipeline to direct its oil to Asian customers.

In denying the pipeline permit, the Obama administration said energy companies can simply reapply. Given the fact that the current permit application was reviewed by the federal

government for three years, it seems apparent the president isn't really interested in creating these energy jobs or in strengthening America's energy security.

This week as President Obama delivers his State of the Union address, millions of Americans will listen for an explanation of why he chose to turn his back on thousands of new jobs when national unemployment has remained above 8.5 percent for 35 consecutive months.

Protecting Property Rights, Not Censorship:

Last week, the popular web site Wikipedia blacked out its content for a day in protest of legislation introduced in Congress to combat online piracy of American intellectual property. Wikipedia and others said the legislation went too far, stepping on free speech rights of Americans. Many of you contacted my office to voice disagreement with the overly broad reach of the House and Senate online piracy bills. I cannot support either bill as currently written.

To safeguard our economy and jobs, intellectual property rights should be afforded significant protection. The growing presence of online piracy represents a serious threat to American entrepreneurs and businesses whose movies, music and other services are in demand world-wide and, accordingly, are the target of criminals often beyond the reach of U.S. law enforcement. Unfortunately, current methods of preventing online theft of American intellectual property are outdated and ineffective.

However, significant changes will be required before the Stop Online Piracy Act (SOPA) can be considered by the full House, if at all. The authors of these bills should therefore go back to the drawing board to improve their legislation so that free speech rights and the structure of the internet are not sacrificed in the important effort to protect intellectual property.

Alabama Jobless Rate Falls:

For the second month in a row, Alabama's unemployment rate has dropped by 0.6 percent, settling at 8.1 percent for December. All six Southwest Alabama counties experienced declines in jobless numbers: Down 0.8 percent in Monroe, 0.7 percent in Mobile, 0.6 percent in Clarke

and Washington, 0.3 percent in Escambia and 0.2 percent in Baldwin. While these gains are certainly encouraging, much work remains to be done to return area employment to pre-recession levels.

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.

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