

Last week, as prices for regular gasoline in Southwest Alabama hovered in the range of \$3.50 to \$3.65 a gallon and the national average topped \$3.70, President Obama mocked the idea that something could be done to reduce Americans' pain at the pump.

To underscore the president's stubborn refusal to do everything possible to reduce pump prices, he also personally lobbied senators to vote against the Keystone pipeline.

A March 6 Gallup poll found that 85 percent of Americans want Washington to take immediate steps to try to control the rising cost of gas. At the same time, President Obama told a rally in Charlotte, NC, that talk of lowering gas prices was a political stunt and Americans should just accept higher prices. "The next time you hear some politician trotting out some three-point plan for two-dollar gas, you let them know, we know better."

When it costs the average driver over \$70 to fill up their tanks, President Obama's attempt to side step the issue of high gas prices highlights just how out of touch his administration is with hardworking Americans. Two weeks ago, Mr. Obama's energy secretary, Steven Chu, told a Senate hearing that high gas prices were not a priority. Last week, Mr. Chu admitted that he didn't even own a car. If Secretary Chu travels around in a government-provided vehicle, just as the President and other cabinet officials do, how can he or the rest of the Obama administration personally understand the impact of skyrocketing gas prices on Americans' budgets?

You don't need an opinion poll to find out that most Americans are concerned about the economy, jobs and gas prices. Last week, President Obama was given an opportunity to do something about all three. When the Senate voted on an amendment to the transportation bill that would clear the way for the quick approval of the Keystone XL pipeline, President Obama personally called senators asking them to vote against it. Instead of supporting a project that would provide at least 20,000 new jobs in the American heartland, generate revenues for communities from Canada to Texas and add to America's supply of oil, the president turned his back.

On February 16, I voted for, and the full House passed, energy legislation that would have expedited approval of the Keystone pipeline project, paving the way for new jobs and American access to abundant Canadian oil. Thanks to President Obama's personal lobbying that

measure failed in the Senate by four votes on March 8. To be sure, the House will continue our efforts to secure approval of the Keystone pipeline despite strong opposition from an administration whose priority is ideology and not the financial well-being of the American people.

### **RESTORE Act Amendment Passes Senate**

The news from the Senate wasn't all negative last week. Senators voted 76 to 22 to approve the Senate version of the RESTORE Act, which would direct 80 percent of federal Clean Water Act fines collected from the Deepwater Horizon oil spill to the five Gulf states, including Alabama, for long term restoration efforts.

The RESTORE Act was offered as an amendment to the transportation bill, which is still being debated in the Senate. The strong bipartisan approval by the Senate adds momentum to the House's efforts to pass a final bill this year. Despite differences between the House and Senate versions of the RESTORE Act, there is a growing consensus in Congress that the majority of fines collected by the federal government from BP and other responsible parties from the 2010 oil spill should be set aside for Gulf restoration.

### **House Passes JOBS Act**

Since January 2011, the Republican House has passed over two dozen bills to make it easier for small businesses to do what they do best – grow and create local jobs. In almost every case, the Democrat-controlled Senate, acting with the approval of President Obama, has blocked our efforts. As they sit on their hands, the president, Senator Reid and their friends in the liberal media have the gall to accuse House Republicans of "doing nothing". No wonder Congress is so unpopular with the American people.

Last Thursday the House passed another bill to give small businesses a lift in this stalled economy. The JOBS Act, which passed with a solid 390 to 23 bipartisan vote, frees small businesses from restrictions that prevent them from attracting investors necessary to expand their operations and hire more workers.

Had I been in Washington on Thursday I would have also voted in support of the JOBS Act, just as I have voted for more than 28 other small business bills that passed the House over the last year. The House vote occurred at the same time as the official Coast Guard memorial service in Mobile for the four fallen crew of CG-6535, which I attended.

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: March 12, 2012