

For the last 41 months our country has endured the longest period of unemployment above eight percent since the Great Depression. Businesses are not hiring and many Americans are asking whether Washington is making the problem worse.

Small business owners across Alabama tell me that uncertainty over the possibility of higher taxes and more costly government regulation have a lot to do with why they are not expanding their stores and factories. They simply lack confidence in a national economy that remains stalled. Not surprisingly, this lack of confidence has held back hiring.

Last week the president took credit for his handling of the economy, noting in a California speech, "We tried our plan and it worked." With all due respect, Mr. President, you are wrong. More than a trillion dollars in questionable stimulus spending, on top of a steady rise of onerous government red tape on business, have failed to put Americans back to work. These policies weigh down the economy through massive new federal debt and have rendered our businesses less profitable and less competitive. This is hardly a plan that has "worked."

But it doesn't have to be this way. Since January of 2011, the House of Representatives has aggressively passed bill after bill to untie the hands of businesses and instill confidence in the economy. What has become of the more than 30 pro-job bills we've passed in the House? They were all blocked by Majority Leader Harry Reid's Senate for political reasons. Apparently, in the Senate politics trumps jobs.

Back in January, President Obama's own Jobs Council issued a report that read much like the House blueprint for putting Americans back to work. Its recommendations of expanded domestic oil drilling and new regulatory reforms to kick-start job creation have largely been ignored by the White House. During a time when 23 million Americans are out of work or underemployed, the president has seemingly decided only one job is important – his. For the last seven months he has failed to meet with his Jobs Council but has found time to make more than 100 political trips.

Undeterred, the House continues to push ahead with legislation to free the hands of businesses and restore confidence in the economy. Last Thursday, the House passed the Red Tape Reduction and Small Business Job Creation Act. If enacted into law, it would freeze any new major federal government regulation on business until the national unemployment rate falls

below six percent.

The growth of federal regulations is emblematic of the disconnect between the Obama administration and America's small businesses. Over the last seven months, some 42,000 pages of new regulations have been published in the Federal Register. These new requirements will cost businesses more than \$56 billion and much of that cost will be passed along to consumers. The Red Tape Reduction Act could save businesses over \$22 billion and 2.6 million pages of paperwork a year.

Also last week, the House passed legislation to overturn President Obama's policy of walling off 85 percent of offshore areas to new drilling. Instead of largely blocking new domestic energy development, as the president favors, the House bill would open more of America's offshore areas to environmentally responsible drilling. Expanding energy production in America will create jobs and help lower fuel costs.

We call on President Obama and Senator Reid to join us in passing legislation to restore small business confidence and return Americans to work.

Service Academy Appointments:

One of the honors of being your congressman is the privilege of nominating South Alabama's brightest young men and women to our nation's service academies.

In order to receive an appointment to the U.S. Air Force Academy, the U.S. Military Academy, the U.S. Naval Academy or the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy, an individual must first receive a nomination from his or her U.S. Representative or Senator.

I am pleased to announce that 11 South Alabama students I nominated have been appointed to the various U.S. Service Academies for the Class of 2016.

Chris Boudreaux, Tom Moore, Carson Orwig, and Madeleine Philpot have received appointments to the U.S. Air Force Academy at Colorado Springs, CO. Ben Andrews, Justin Joiner, and Tom Moore have received appointments to the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, NY. Dan Drew, Josh Harrelson, Patricia Neno, and Danny Rose have each received appointments to the U.S. Naval Academy at Annapolis, MD. Finally, Will Burch has received an appointment to the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy at King's Point, NY.

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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