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SPEAKER



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Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives

September 6, 2011

The President  
The White House  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We have read with great interest recent news stories describing the "jobs plan" you intend to unveil this week. We were particularly heartened by comments from individuals in your Administration indicating a desire to find areas of common ground that can be implemented in divided government.

We understand that many in your party want to build on the \$800 billion stimulus bill that you proposed (and the Democratic Congress passed) as the best method for improving the economy. As you know, we argued at the time that a large, deficit-financed, government spending bill was not the best way to improve our economic situation or create sustainable growth in employment. Given the current unemployment and deficit numbers, we believe our concerns have been validated.

House Republicans have worked throughout the year to implement the Pledge to America, our governing agenda focused on removing government barriers to private-sector job creation, and later this year built on the Pledge by putting forth an expanded jobs agenda, our Plan for America's Job Creators. Our new majority has passed more than a dozen pro-growth measures to address the jobs crisis. Aside from repeal of the 1099 reporting requirement in the health care law, however, none of the jobs measures passed by the House to date have been taken up by the Democrat-controlled Senate. For your consideration, attached is a list of those jobs-related bills passed by the House that Leader Reid has thus far refused to consider.

Last week we also announced a legislative calendar for the fall with a heavy focus on repeal of excessive, job-destroying regulations and the pursuit of pro-growth tax relief. American employers are seeking relief from the excessive federal regulation that is hampering job creation across our country. As we all know, some regulations are necessary to help keep Americans safe and to protect our citizens' rights. But there are also regulations that unnecessarily increase costs for Americans, for job-creators, and for taxpayers, preventing our economy from creating new jobs. Small businesses, which are the primary engine of job creation in our economy, too often

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bear the brunt of excessive regulation. Your administration has publicly listed a total of 219 new regulatory actions under consideration for the upcoming year, each of which would have an estimated cost to our economy of \$100 million or more. Early last week, in response to our request, you disclosed that seven of these regulations would have an estimated economic cost of more than \$1 billion each, with a potential combined cost of more than \$100 billion in a single year. While we appreciate your announcement on Friday asking the EPA to withdraw its new draft ozone standards, we believe it is critical to not stop there, and instead act to further reduce this cumulative regulatory drag of uncertainty on economic growth and job creation. Our hope is that both parties can work together in the coming weeks to reduce excessive regulation that is hampering job growth in our country. To facilitate such efforts, we hope that prior to your address to a Joint Session, you will disclose the cost estimates for the remaining 212 new regulatory actions planned by your administration.

While we each sincerely believe that our own policy prescriptions for economic recovery are what is best for the country, neither of us is likely to convince the other in a manner that results in the full implementation of those policies. While it is important that we continue to debate and discuss our different approaches to job creation, it is also critical that our differences not preclude us from taking action in areas where there is common agreement. We should not approach this as an all or nothing situation.

For example, it is our understanding that you may propose an infrastructure initiative as part of your jobs plan. We are not opposed to initiatives to repair and improve infrastructure, and believe there are reforms that can be implemented that would improve their effectiveness in a manner that supports economic growth. Current law requires that states set-aside 10 percent of their surface transportation funds for transportation enhancements, which must be used for items such as establishment of transportation museums, education activities for pedestrians and bicyclists, acquisition of scenic easements, historic preservation, operation of historic transportation facilities, etc. While many of the initiatives funded by this mandatory set-aside may be worthy projects, eliminating this required set-aside would allow states to devote more money to the types of infrastructure programs you are advocating without adding to the deficit. We believe such a reform would be consistent with your statement last week that we should "reform the way transportation money is invested, to eliminate waste, to give states more control over the projects that are right for them."

In light of your recent comments, we are also hopeful that there is an opportunity for bipartisan agreement on a proposal to expedite the permitting process for construction projects. For example, moving to concurrent rather than sequential reviews by federal agencies and setting time limits for reviews could greatly speed up the approval process and get more projects underway faster.

The press has also reported that you are looking at reforms to our unemployment system to assist those that have been or are at risk of being unemployed for an extended period of time. Reportedly your administration is looking at the "Georgia Works" program as a potential model.

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As you may recall, we suggested adoption of a "Georgia Works" type program during our discussion of efforts to help the economy back in December of 2009 (White House meeting on December 9<sup>th</sup> and subsequent letter on December 22<sup>nd</sup>). We continue to stand ready to work with you to implement common-sense reforms in this area.

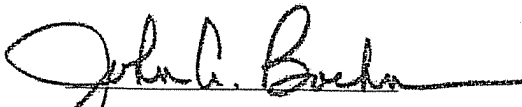
Another area for potential bipartisan cooperation on job creation is trade. Americans have been waiting for years for the White House to advance the three pending trade agreements with Colombia, Panama, and South Korea, which collectively would, according to your Administration's own estimates, support the creation of 250,000 jobs. Expanding markets for U.S. small businesses and manufacturers is critical to create new American jobs. The House is ready – and has been ready – to pass these free-trade agreements, in tandem with separate consideration of Trade Adjustment Assistance legislation, as soon as you send them to Congress. Further delay of these bipartisan job-creating trade bills is, in our view, unacceptable.

These reforms alone are not a substitute for a comprehensive pro-growth jobs agenda, such as the one House Republicans have put forth and continue to implement. But they are potential areas for common ground.

Obviously achieving bipartisan agreement on these and other initiatives requires more than just one side declaring a proposal to be "bipartisan." It requires that we work together. As such, we would suggest that prior to your address to Congress you convene a bipartisan, bicameral meeting of the Congressional leadership so that we may have the opportunity to constructively discuss your proposals.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,



John A. Boehner  
Speaker



Eric Cantor  
Majority Leader

Enclosure

**Attachment: Bills Passed by the House of Representatives that Have Not Been Considered  
by the Democrat-Controlled Senate**

- **The Reducing Regulatory Burdens Act (H.R. 872)**, which would halt duplicative federal regulations on farmers and small business owners that are impeding job creation.
- **The Energy Tax Prevention Act (H.R. 910)**, which would stop the federal bureaucracy from imposing a job-destroying national energy tax.
- **The Clean Water Cooperative Federalism Act (H.R. 2018)**, which would restrict the federal government's ability to second-guess or delay a state's permitting and water quality certification decisions under the Clean Water Act once the EPA has already approved a state's program, preventing approval process delays that cost jobs and leave businesses hampered by uncertainty.
- **The Consumer Financial Protection & Soundness Improvement Act (H.R. 1315)**, which would increase consumer protection and government accountability by eliminating the ability of Dodd-Frank's unelected Consumer Financial Protection Bureau Director to unilaterally carry out regulations that hurt job growth.
- **The Restarting American Offshore Leasing Now Act (H.R. 1230)**, which would help to address high gas prices and support the creation of new American jobs by increasing offshore energy production.
- **The Putting the Gulf of Mexico Back to Work Act (H.R. 1229) and the Reversing President Obama's Offshore Moratorium Act (H.R. 1231)**, which would help to put thousands of Americans back to work by ending the de facto moratorium on American energy production in the Gulf of Mexico in a safe, responsible and transparent manner by setting firm timelines for considering permits to drill.
- **The Jobs and Energy Permitting Act of 2011 (H.R. 2021)**, which would streamline the permit process for American energy production to help lower prices and create tens of thousands of new jobs.
- **The North American-Made Energy Security Act (H.R. 1938)**, which would require the federal government to make a determination by a date certain on whether or not it will allow the Keystone XL pipeline expansion, which is projected to directly create 20,000 jobs and support the creation of thousands more, to move forward.
- **A Budget for Fiscal Year 2012 (H.Con.Res. 34)**. With Washington's failure to control spending hurting job creation in America, the House has passed its budget, while the Senate has not yet considered a budget of its own.