

Sandy, but we still have created about 100,000 new jobs. Private sector job growth has been significant. We are approaching—let's see, it must be about 4 million jobs now that have been created. That doesn't nearly make up for what was lost during the Bush years, but we are making progress.

People in America realize we can no longer have the top-down economy the Republicans so loved during the Bush years and what they wanted to create again with Governor Romney.

I would be happy to take a look at the proposal my friend the Republican leader has shown us if we could come up with something like we did when they created this other furor by refusing to increase the debt, where we had an ability to come here and have a couple of votes to determine if we were going to increase it. If that is what they want to do again, I would be happy to seriously take a look at that and report to the White House and my caucus, but until then I object.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Objection is heard.

The minority leader.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, my friend indicates that there is some confusion about who the quarterback is on the Republican side. Of course, that is quite common when you don't have a White House. But there is no doubt about who the quarterback is on the Democratic side. The quarterback on the Democratic side is the President of the United States. Unfortunately, he keeps throwing interceptions, and we are moving backward and backward and backward away from the goal line. We have \$4 trillion in annual deficits, and my friend from Nevada still wants to blame that on George Bush? And now the President is asking for unlimited—unlimited—authority to borrow whenever he wants to for whatever amount he wants? If the majority leader supports that proposal, I would hope we could work together and get a vote on it to give his Members a chance to express themselves as to whether they think that is a good way forward for our country—to give this President or any other President unlimited authority to borrow as much as he wants at any time he wants from the Chinese or anybody else. That is the question.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, of course, as I said, I will be happy to look at the proposal by my friend, but the President doesn't want to do anything other than what we have done before, and that is where we are now, and that is why I would be happy to take a look at his proposal, because if it is what we did last summer, I would be happy to take a look at that and move forward.

Mr. President, it is not only we Democrats, but we have a long line of Republicans who, as I outlined early on, are recognizing that we need to immediately make sure the middle class and the poor are taken care of without their taxes being increased. We have Representatives COLE, SCOTT; David Brooks, a columnist from the New

York Times; Senators SNOWE, COLLINS, and COBURN; and a long list of Republicans saying let's move on.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business until 11:45 a.m., with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each, with the time from 10 a.m. to 11 a.m. reserved for speeches by retiring Senators.

The Senator from Colorado.

EXTENDING TAX CUTS

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. President, I would like to associate myself with the majority leader's remarks. We do need to extend the tax cuts for the middle class as soon as possible. That is clearly the message the American people sent on November 6 in the nationwide election we held.

I also wish to respond to the comments and the conversation between the two leaders over the debt ceiling limit. It is important to recognize that when we raise the debt ceiling, all we are doing is keeping faith with what Congress has already appropriated, what Congress has already made clear we would spend on behalf of our country in all the various ways the Federal Government operates. We cannot afford to have a situation such as we had August before last where we dallied and literally shot our economy and ourselves in the foot by not extending the debt ceiling. We saw the rating agencies lower our national rating for the first time in history. There is a way to do this, to have a mechanism in place so we never again get in a situation where the debt ceiling becomes a point of contention and literally hurts our economy.

So, again, I want to say that the majority leader is on track. Let's extend these middle-class tax cuts right now and bring some certainty and help our economy grow. The majority leader is on point when he shared the numbers. I think we have seen about 5 million jobs created after approaching literally the great recession when President Obama first took office. So let's get that job done.

WIND PRODUCTION TAX CREDIT

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. President, I have come to the floor this morning, as I have for many mornings, to talk about the wind energy industry and the importance of tax credits. And this is another job I want to see us get done as soon as possible—to extend the wind production tax credit. It expires in less than a month.

This tax credit has been vital for job creation and for our American manufacturing. Literally, the PTC—the production tax credit—has encouraged the creation of tens of thousands of good-paying middle-class jobs, and it has led to millions in capital investment in States such as Colorado. In fact, 48 States have a wind energy industry presence. Along with the capital investments, what we have seen is the development of thousands of megawatts of clean renewable wind power. And if we let this PTC expire, the stakes are very high.

I have come to the floor 24 times to speak to the importance of the PTC and the benefits it provides for families and businesses in every State across the Nation. I am here because the wind PTC is a critical investment in and a downpayment toward a clean energy future—a future at risk if we don't act and act soon. It is not too late to act. It truly isn't. And to give us more motivation, to point out what is at risk, I wish to focus today on the State of Minnesota and direct my remarks to their wind energy industry.

Minnesota, as we know, is the Land of 10,000 Lakes. Although Minnesota's namesake may be its water, it has become a leader in the wind energy industry and a compelling example of the positive effects the PTC can have in a State. Let me share some numbers to make the point.

As of 2011, Minnesota ranks fifth nationally for the most installed wind capacity, with over 2,700 megawatts, and it trails only Illinois, Iowa, California, and Texas. You can see all the blue areas on the map. Those are areas in which there is installed wind operations. In fact, wind energy meets 12.7—I will round that up to 13 percent of the State's energy needs. This ranks fourth among all States. That means they are powering through the wind energy industry the equivalent of 770,000 Minnesota homes, and that number is going up. It is growing.

We know through our two colleagues from Minnesota that Minnesotans take pride in everything having to do with Minnesota, and well they should. And they are taking pride in being in the forefront of wind power growth. Since 2003 Minnesotans have purchased 1 billion kilowatt hours of energy through Windsource, which is Minnesota's voluntary green power program. It means over 20,000 residents and about 240 businesses pay a little extra on their electric bill to support wind energy and show their commitment to a clean energy economy. I know this works because we have a similar program in Colorado. Excel also has a presence in Colorado, and they offer Windsource to Coloradans.

Now, Minnesota's prominence as a wind power State has been aided by the fact that it also has a successful wind manufacturing industry, and those manufacturing facilities in Minnesota have created hundreds of good-paying jobs and new investments. Federal incentives, including the PTC, have

played a crucial role in making Minnesota the wind leader it is today.

If that isn't enough, I want to highlight further the substantial benefits this crucial industry has had on Minnesota.

No. 1, the wind industry accounts for 3,000 good-paying jobs for hard-working Minnesotans, including jobs at the State's 16 wind manufacturing facilities. You can see all these green circles, and those green circles are where those manufacturing facilities are located. The workers at these plants and the facilities themselves help supply and maintain wind projects that contribute \$7.6 million annually in property taxes. Those projects, in fact, provide local communities with funds to help improve schools, roads, and all the other crucial services local governments provide.

Furthermore, Minnesota's strong manufacturing industry has supported rapid growth in the wind capacity of the State. Let me share those numbers with you. In 2011 the State added 542 megawatts of wind power capacity, the fourth-most of any State. So extending the PTC is crucial to continuing Minnesota's growth in wind energy and making progress toward a clean energy economy. In fact, the Minnesota utility, Northern States Power, will have close to 1,900 megawatts of wind in their energy portfolio by the end of 2012. And listen to this: In 2011 the utility got more electricity from wind than it did from natural gas.

I know many of us understand what the future could hold, based on what experts are telling us, and we know that wind and natural gas will be partners going forward.

There is a synergy between wind and natural gas. This stands out as an important milestone for Northern States Power. This company's investment in wind energy has helped reduce carbon dioxide emissions by an estimated 3.1 million tons. So the leadership of companies such as Northern States Power demonstrates that when we invest in clean energy, we are creating jobs and strengthening our energy security at the same time.

I want to close with a couple of comments more broadly. Minnesota is not alone in its success, but these gains and the thousands of jobs that the PTC supports are at risk if we don't act. During the summer and the fall work period, we saw the effects of not extending the production tax credit. Companies such as Vestas in Colorado announced layoffs and pulled back capital investments.

It is pretty simple. Production tax credit equals jobs. We need to pass it as soon as possible. Enough is enough. If we don't extend it, we are going to see a very significant continuation of these job losses.

So let's find a way forward. Let's work together. Let's extend the PTC. The longer this extension is delayed, the quicker success stories from States such as Colorado and Minnesota could

disappear. We simply cannot let this happen. Let's extend the PTC as soon as possible.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Missouri.

RUSSIA PNTR

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. President, I am pleased the Senate is considering a critical bill this week to establish permanent normal trade relations with Russia. I should have borrowed my friend's sign that says "PTC Creates Jobs," which may very well be an accurate equation, but PNTR also will equal jobs. We can compete given the opportunity to compete, and that is what these trade relationships are all about. This legislation overwhelmingly has passed the House. It is going to have strong bipartisan support in the Senate, and I believe it will pass today and needs to pass today.

Russia joined the World Trade Organization in August of 2012. Since that time, our exporters—U.S. companies—have not been able to take full advantage of the fact that they have this new way to get to the Russian market because we haven't granted permanent normal trade relationships to Russia.

Since all the other major WTO members already have that permanent relationship, they have had a real advantage since August of last year, as they can move forward immediately and compete and make agreements that American companies can't make. American companies are the only companies losing market share after Russia joined the World Trade Organization—and not because they are not as competitive. But until we do what we need to do here today, they will be working at a real disadvantage.

In addition to securing a level playing field for American companies, we also need to replace the Jackson-Vanik policy with something that, frankly, has now more real-world potential and real-world understanding. Russia is clearly not the Russia of Soviet days, but we still have reasons to be concerned about individual freedom of expression in Russia. We need to express that concern. That is why I am in support of a portion of this bill that Senator CARDIN and Senator KYL have fought for during this whole discussion and now have in this bill, in the House bill—the portion where we look at the terrible treatment and ultimate death of Sergei Magnitsky.

This provision will ensure that those who were complicit in those activities and in his ill-treatment and death don't get a free pass. It sends messages to other countries that while we want to trade with them, we also want to continue to speak strongly for the rights of individuals, no matter where they are, to speak up against their government.

Normalizing trade relations with Russia is also an important move to my State and, I assume, all our States.

I know in Missouri we exported \$86 million to Russia in 2011, and exports are up 6 percent already from that year since we started 2012. Worldwide, Missouri exports more than \$12.3 billion in goods and services—or at least we did in 2010—and almost half of that was exported to countries where we have free-trade agreements. We need to continue to do that. Nearly 300 Missouri companies supported 32,000 jobs that were driven by exports. So 32,000 people in Missouri have jobs because of trade, and a lot of that trade is in our hemisphere.

I want to come back to that in a minute. I am concerned on the Russian agreement that Russia has failed to agree to bring its animal health and food safety measures in line with the WTO agreement on the application of sanitary and phyto-sanitary measures, called the SPS agreement. I am going to continue to monitor this situation to ensure that American agricultural exports—and pork would be a good example of this—don't face market access barriers in Russia.

Free trade has to be fair trade. Free trade doesn't work if it is not fair trade. If it is fair trade and free trade, American workers and American companies can and do actively and positively compete all over the world. In fact, we have a little bit of trade imbalance these days, and I think we should be concerned that 57 percent of it is in energy. If we become more energy self-sufficient, we could easily reduce our trade imbalance by 50 percent. If we just got North American energy as our focus for energy, we could only be more secure, and we would also have a better trade relationship.

This legislation we are dealing with today, the Russia PNTR, builds on the progress we made last year with the passage of the three free-trade amendments. Many of us on this side worked closely with our friends on the other side and the White House to get these long negotiated deals passed. In the 6 months since our free-trade agreement with South Korea took effect, trade between our two countries has increased by over \$30 billion—a \$30 billion increase in 6 months.

As we are trying to figure how to grow our economy, the export world and free trade is one of the places we can have the most speedy application of what we do to grow our economy. Thirty billion dollars in Korea alone.

American exports to Columbia have increased 20 percent since that free-trade agreement took effect. The ratification of the Panama Free Trade Agreement just went into effect a few weeks ago, but that enables American firms to fully participate in the economic opportunities that will occur with the expansion of the Panama Canal and the continued growth of that economy. What happens there is critical to us.

This agreement, I have said already, has passed the House and I think it will pass the Senate today. There are other