

our economy and to national security. Republicans would rather cut Medicare, education, and medical research than close a single wasteful tax loophole or ask a single millionaire to contribute a little more. The Republicans should stop protecting millionaires, billionaires, and wealthy corporations and start working with us to pass an alternative to these terrible cuts that protect the middle class. We want to start to do something to begin changing this so we protect the middle class. We must not jeopardize the progress of the last 4 years.

Even though our work to restore economic prosperity must continue, we should take pride in the 35 months of private sector job growth and 6.1 million new American jobs. Imagine how many more jobs could be created with just a little cooperation from our Republican colleagues.

Now our friends across the aisle have another opportunity to engage constructively. They have a second chance to work with Democrats to rebuild the middle class by investing in that which in the past has made Americans strong—world-class roads, bridges, dams, peerless schools, industrial factories, and creative entrepreneurs who are the best in the world.

President Ronald Reagan, in his first address of a joint session of Congress, spoke of these building blocks of prosperity. Ronald Reagan said:

Substance and prosperity of our Nation is built by wages brought home from the factories and the mills, the farms, and the shops. They are the services provided in 10,000 corners of America: the interest on the thrift of our people and the returns for their risk-taking. The production of America is the possession of those who build, serve, create, and produce.

He didn't say the substance of our Nation is built on profits gleaned from shipping jobs overseas. He didn't say the prosperity of America is the possession of investment banks or wealthy oil companies alone. Rather, he said, our substance and prosperity are earned in factories, mills, farms, and shops. The rewards belong to all those who build, serve, create, and produce—not only to the few strong enough or rich enough to take for themselves.

It is time to return to those roots. It is time to remember fairness is not just a principle for which to strive but a powerful engine of growth and prosperity for all Americans.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader is recognized.

STATE OF THE UNION

Mr. McCONNELL. I would like to say a word about last night's State of the Union. To me, at least, the occasion cried out for bold and courageous leadership from a reelected President who

has run his last campaign. It called for a President who was willing to stare down America's challenges, reject the easy choices, and step outside his political comfort zone to unite a deeply divided public behind a common goal.

Sadly, history will record no such moment. An opportunity to bring together the country instead became another retreat of lip service and liberalism.

For a Democratic President entering his second term, it was simply unequal to the moment. Following 4 years of this President's unwillingness to challenge liberal dogma, we have more of the same. The President spoke about energy infrastructure but didn't even mention the Keystone Pipeline. He chose the Nation's biggest stage to promote something that is inefficient and costly, such as solar panels, instead of something that is proven, reliable, and domestically produced, such as coal.

He advocated tax reform but mostly as a way to increase the size of government, not as a way to increase our competitiveness. He spoke of workers' minimum wages instead of their maximum potential.

In short, with the exception of his impressive delivery and trademark style, last night's speech was pedestrian, liberal boilerplate that any Democratic lawmaker could have given at any time in recent memory. Gun control, cap and trade, tax increases, and spending programs are exactly what we have come to expect from a liberal President who seems perfectly content to preside over a divided country and a stagnant economy.

Of course, everyone recognizes the President is a very good campaigner. We all acknowledge his skill in that area. He will be doing more of that today down in North Carolina.

A State of the Union Address should be about something bigger. Instead of dividing Americans, it should unite them. Instead of inflaming passions, it should show what is possible when the two parties actually work together.

I am glad he mentioned things such as expanding trade opportunities with Asia and Europe. That is an area where we can cooperate, and I look forward to working with colleagues from both parties to do just that.

Overall, I am disappointed. I am especially disappointed he chose not to seriously address the transcendent issue of our time, which is finding a way to control our spiraling debt before it controls us. If we don't do that, we will not be able to leave our children the kind of country our parents left us; that is, a goal all of us should share.

Take the Obama sequester as just one example. The President had a chance last night to offer a thoughtful alternative to his sequester, one that could reduce spending in a smarter way. That is what Republicans have been calling for all along, and it is the kind of thing the House has already voted to do not once but twice. We

want to work with him to actually make that happen.

Instead we just heard gimmicks and tax hikes, just one more plan from the President that is designed to fail so he can blame others when it does fail. It is too bad for the country. It truly is.

The American people, in their collective judgment, decided to send divided government to Washington. I am sure the President wishes that weren't so, but it is the reality, and Americans look to him to use forums such as the State of the Union to bring people together and get things done with the government we have, not the one the President wishes he had. That is what Ronald Reagan did, and he accomplished great things. President Clinton was able to get quite a bit done with divided government too.

Why is it this President can't seem to demonstrate the same kind of leadership? He says he wants balance—balance. His approach so far has been anything but. Just as "investment" has become a Washington code word for more spending, "balance" has now become a code word for my way or the highway.

Remember, the President already received the additional revenue he wanted in January. He didn't agree to a single cut in spending then, just revenue. Obviously, the balanced thing to do now would be to look at cuts. Last night the President didn't propose any real cuts; he just demanded more and more taxes. With a \$16 trillion debt, he actually called for more spending too, although he didn't say how he would pay for it or even how much it would cost. Pretend, for a moment, the Republicans agreed to go along with all those taxes and all that spending. What do you think he would demand the next time and the time after that? Of course, more taxes and more spending. And we all know Washington uses tax increases to fund even more spending on things such as robosquirrels and Solyndra, not to reduce the deficit. That is what history shows us. It is how we got in this mess in the first place.

So we are not going to play the Washington game. The stakes for American families are too high to keep taking the easy way out, with more taxes and more wasteful spending. Republicans believe taking on this massive burden of debt should be more important in this town than winning the next election. That is why we need commonsense reforms, such as a balanced budget amendment. All Republicans support it, and Democrats should too. But we won't get anywhere as a nation if the President refuses to lead. We just can't. So the question is, Will he lead or will he continue this endless campaign?

I want to end on a positive note, so I would like to point out that there were areas of agreement last night, and I particularly appreciated the President's reference to Burma. And Senator RUBIO did a great job with the Republican address. I hope the President