

The President's Weekly Address

October 8, 2011

Next week, the Senate will vote on the "American Jobs Act." It's a bill that will put more people to work and put more money in the pockets of working Americans. And it will provide our economy with the jolt that it really needs right now.

This is not the time for the usual games or political gridlock in Washington. The challenges facing financial markets around the world could have very real effects on our own economy at a time when it's already fragile. But this jobs bill can help guard against another downturn here in America.

This isn't just my belief. This is what independent economists have said. Not just politicians, not just people in my administration, independent experts who do this for a living have said that this jobs bill will have a significant effect for our economy and middle class families all across America. But if we don't act, the opposite will be true: There will be fewer jobs and weaker growth.

So any Senator out there who's thinking about voting against this jobs bill needs to explain why they would oppose something that we know would improve our economic situation. If the Republicans in Congress think they have a better plan for creating jobs right now, they should prove it. Because one of the same independent economists who looked at our plan just said that their ideas, quote, "wouldn't mean much for the economy in the near term."

If their plan doesn't measure up, the American people deserve to know what it is that Republicans in Congress don't like about this jobs plan. You hear a lot of our Republican friends say that one of the most important things we can do is cut taxes. Well, they should love this plan. The "American Jobs Act" would cut taxes for virtually every worker and small business in America. And if you're a small-business owner that hires new workers, raises wages, or hires a veteran, you get an additional tax cut.

Right now hundreds of thousands of teachers and firefighters and police officers have been laid off because of State budget cuts. This jobs bill will put a lot of these men and women back to work. Right now there are millions of laid-off construction workers who could be repairing our bridges and roads and modernizing our schools. Why wouldn't we want to put these men and women to work rebuilding America?

The proposals in this bill are steps we have to take if we want to build an economy that lasts, if we want to be able to compete with other countries for jobs that restore a sense of security for the middle class. But we also have to rein in our deficit and start living within our means, which is why this jobs bill is paid for by asking millionaires and billionaires to pay their fair share.

Some see this as class warfare. I see it as a simple choice. We can either keep taxes exactly as they are for millionaires and billionaires, or we can ask them to pay at least the same rate as a plumber or a bus driver. And in the process, we can put teachers and construction workers and veterans back on the job. We can either fight to protect their tax cuts, or we can cut taxes for virtually every worker and small business in America. But we can't afford to do both. It's that simple.

There are too many people hurting in this country for us to simply do nothing. The economy is too fragile for us to let politics get in the way of action. The people who represent you in Washington have a responsibility to do what's best for you, not what's best for their party or what's going to help them win an election that's more than a year away. So I need you to keep making your voices heard in Washington. I need you to remind these folks who they work for. And I need you to tell your Senators to do the right thing by passing this jobs bill right away.

Thanks so much.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 1:35 p.m. on October 7 in the Roosevelt Room at the White House for broadcast on October 8. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on October 7, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on October 8.

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