the likelihood is high of a double-dip recession. So the last thing we should be doing right now is wasting time, but that is what Republicans are forcing us to do.

Last night, a majority of the Senate voted to take up this bill. But Republicans will not put politics aside for a moment, even when the price of their stubbornness is struggling families and failing businesses.

I say it again: Democrats are not going to give up on creating jobs. We will introduce the American Jobs Act piece by piece.

I had two conversations last night while the vote was taking place with Republicans, and both Republican Senators said they would like to join in moving some pieces of this legislation. So we are going to do that, and I am glad to see there is some interest by my Republican colleagues in doing that.

Many of the ideas we will advance will be proposals Republicans have supported in the past, as I have already indicated. I think they will have to explain to the American people—at a time of record unemployment—why they continue to oppose job-creating tax cuts for small businesses and the middle class and other proposals they have supported in the past. So, as I said a minute ago, I look forward to working with my Republican colleagues in moving forward parts of this bill they like. At the end of the day, if they do not do this, their motive will be crystal clear: politics.

So I hope Republicans will be able to see past partisan posturing to support their own past proposals when we consider them individually in the next few weeks.

Take, for example, the payroll tax cut. My friend, the Republican leader, has supported payroll tax cuts in the past. Most Republicans have. This is what my friend, the Republican leader, said about the same tax cut in 2009. I quote:

> It would put a lot of money back in the hands of businesses and in the hands of individuals. . . . Republicans, generally speaking, from Maine to Mississippi, like tax relief.

So that is part of the American Jobs Act.

Another Republican Senator sponsored a bill to give tax credits to businesses that hire out-of-work veterans. Yet that same Republican Senator voted against the same proposal last night. It was part of the bill last night.

Republicans have supported these proposals in the past. They should have supported them yesterday. But Democrats care so much about creating jobs that we will give our Republican colleagues another opportunity to do the right thing, and we will move forward in the best way we can to put these matters before the American people, if necessary, piece by piece.

TRADE AGREEMENTS

Mr. REID. Madam President, we have worked hard to be in the posture we are in today to have votes on these trade bills. My friend, the Republican leader, has heard me say this too much, but I do not favor these bills. But a majority of this Senate does, and I believed it was important we move these forward. I have worked with the Republican leader to do it today. I think it is important to do it today. We have the President of Korea here in America. He is going to speak to a joint meeting of Congress tomorrow. I look forward to a very productive day in moving these matters forward.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

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

THE JOBS BILL

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, before my friend, the majority leader, leaves the floor, let me remind him and our Senate colleagues and the American people that Republicans were prepared to vote on the President's second version of the stimulus bill last night. In fact, I offered a unanimous consent that we have that vote—not the motion to proceed to it but the actual vote. I am not going to renew that request at the moment but just would say to my friend, we are happy to have that vote. We were happy to have it last night.

With regard to the pieces of it, my friend is correct; some of the pieces of this second stimulus might well be appropriate. I have recommended to the joint select committee—that he and I appointed 50 percent of—that they take a look at some of the pieces of it which could well be included in a product we are going to get before Thanksgiving before the Senate and the House.

So, again, we would be happy to vote on the entire package. We were happy to do it last night and also happy to look at pieces of it. We do have, as the majority leader and I have discussed before, important work to do in the Senate. We have the trade agreements we are going to approve tonight. We have three appropriations bills we are going to go to after that—the basic work of government, which we have not done in the last few years, the American people would like to see us do. We also have a joint select committee set up that could look at parts of the proposal to which the majority leader is referring. So I have some optimism that we will be able to come together on pieces of it that we think make sense.

I will say that as far as I know, there is not a single Republican who thinks it is a good idea to raise taxes on over 300,000 business owners, which is what would happen under the so-called millionaires' surtax. So there are parts of it we very much disagree with. We have divided government. Neither party controls the entire government. We will only be able to pass those things we do agree on. I think there are parts of the package my friend refers to that could well be agreed to at some point this year on a bipartisan basis.

FREE-TRADE AGREEMENTS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, later today the Senate will show that Democrats and Republicans can, in fact, work together to make it easier for American businesses to create jobs.

By passing free-trade agreements with Colombia, Panama, and South Korea, we will help the economy, and we will put the lie to the ridiculous Obama campaign claim that Republicans are somehow rooting against the economy. Nothing could be more ridiculous and absurd as to suggest that Republicans are somehow rooting against our economy.

In fact, if President Obama were willing to work with us on a more bipartisan piece of legislation, nobody would even be talking about a dysfunctional Congress. There would not be any reason to.

But, as we all know, that does not fit in with the President's election strategy. The White House has made it clear that the President is praying for gridlock—he is actually hoping for gridlock—so he has somebody besides himself to point the finger at next November.

That is a big mistake. The American people will not tolerate their own President putting politics ahead of working with Congress on the kind of bipartisan legislation that we know both parties could agree on right now.

So this morning I would like to repeat my call to the President to put the political playbook aside and work with us instead on the kind of bipartisan, job-creating legislation the American people truly want.

The trade bills we will be voting on tonight are a good start. There is no reason we should have had to wait nearly 3 years for this President to send them to Congress for a vote, but they are a good start nonetheless—3 years late but still very important to do.

Now let's move on to some other things. We have pointed to areas such as regulatory reform, tax reform, and energy exploration where the parties could help create jobs without raising taxes or adding to the deficit.

It is just the kind of bipartisan cooperation that the American people are actually demanding from us, and what I am saying this morning is that Republicans are eager and willing to join Democrats in making that happen.

The Presidential election, for goodness' sake, is 13 months away; 13 months from now is the Presidential election. There is plenty of time to campaign. Why don't we put that off for a while and do what we were sent here to do?

But right now we have an opportunity to work together. Let's put aside the political playbook and focus

on results. I know that does not come easy for some around here. The senior Senator from New York, for example, made it pretty clear yesterday that he is more interested in drawing a contrast with Republicans than he is in actually passing bipartisan legislation that we know will spur job growth. But I do not believe the 14 million Americans looking for work right now care more about contrast than about jobs. The jobs crisis we are in calls for lawmakers to rise above these games.

Americans expect us to do something to help create jobs. That is what we should be doing. That is why Republicans will continue to seek to find Democrats who are more interested in jobs than in political posturing and work with them on bipartisan legislation such as the trade bills we will vote on tonight.

What we will not do, though, is vote in favor of any more misguided stimulus bills because some bill writer slapped the word ''jobs'' on the cover page. The stimulus bill with the word ''jobs'' slapped on the cover page and wrapped around a talking-point tax hike is not our idea of what is good for America. We refuse to raise taxes on the very people Americans are depending on to create jobs. We need to be looking for ways to make it easier to create jobs, not harder.

For nearly 3 years, Republicans have told Democrats again and again that we are willing and eager to work with the Democrats anywhere, anytime, on real job-promoting legislation on which both sides could agree.

I have been calling on the President to approve these three free-trade agreements since the day he took the oath of office. All the President had to do was to follow through on these agreements and send them up to Congress, and we would have had an early bipartisan achievement that did not add a single dime to the deficit, that would have convinced people the two sides could work together, and that by the President's own assessment created tens of thousands of jobs right here at home. But he did not. The President chose to push a highly partisan stimulus bill instead that the administration said would keep unemployment below 8 percent. We all know how that turned out. Nearly 3 years later, the only thing left is the nearly $1 trillion it added to the debt and the government programs it created. As for jobs, well, unemployment has been above 8 percent for 32 months straight, and according to the Labor Department, there are now 1.5 million fewer jobs than there were then.

It is time to try something different. Republicans have proposed a number of ideas that would not only represent a change in direction but would also attract broad bipartisan support. There is no good reason whatsoever for the President and Democrats in Congress to prevent us from doing these things. As I see it, the President actually has a choice: He can spend the next 13 months trying to get Republicans to vote against legislation which will not create sustainable private sector jobs and which is designed to fail in Congress or he can work with us on legislation that will actually encourage small businesses to create jobs and is actually designed to pass.

There is an entire menu of bipartisan job-promoting proposals the President could choose to pursue over the next year. Republicans hope he works with us to approve them. Americans are waiting. We are ready to act. The free-trade agreements we are voting on tonight are a good first step. They demonstrate the way Washington can actually help tackle the jobs crisis, not by spending borrowed money to create temporary jobs—spending borrowed money to create temporary jobs. We have tried that. This will lower barriers to private enterprise, unleashing the power of the private sector to make and sell products, expand market share, and in doing so create sustainable private sector jobs that will not disappear when the Federal cash spigot runs dry. But if we are going to tackle the enormous challenges we face, we need to do much more than that. With these trade agreements, we are showing we can work together to create jobs and help the economy. We can and must do more of this kind of thing.

I yield the floor.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

UNITED STATES-KOREA FREE TRADE AGREEMENT IMPLEMENTATION ACT

UNITED STATES-PANAMA TRADE PROMOTION AGREEMENT IMPLEMENTATION ACT

UNITED STATES-COLOMBIA TRADE PROMOTION AGREEMENT IMPLEMENTATION ACT

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will consider H.R. 3080, H.R. 3079, and H.R. 3078 en bloc, notwithstanding the lack of receipt of papers from the House of Representatives.

Under the previous order, there will be up to 12 hours of debate, with the time equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

Mr. JOHANNS. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. JOHANNS. Madam President, I come to the floor today—thankfully for the last time, I hope—in support of the pending free-trade agreements with Korea, Panama, and Colombia. For nearly 3 years we have heard the administration say the right things. Yet there were countless delays. It has been 1,566 days since the U.S.-Korea Free Trade Agreement was signed, 1,568 days for the Panama agreement, and 1,786 days since we completed negotiations with Colombia. Finally, though, I believe the waiting has ended, and the administration took action and has submitted these agreements for a vote. I am eager to vote for all three FTAs this evening and to see their job-creating power in action. By the administration's own estimates, these agreements will spur a quarter of a million new jobs.

We should all be able to agree that the benefits of trade are significant. In my home State of Nebraska alone, more than 19,000 jobs and more than $5.5 billion in revenue were directly tied to exports in this last year. With these agreements, these statistics will only improve. Nebraska is a big agricultural State, and these three agreements eliminate tariffs and other barriers on most agricultural products, including beef, corn, soybeans, and pork—all products grown in Nebraska. In fact, according to the Farm Bureau and economic analysis from the USDA, full implementation of those agreements will result in nearly $2.5 billion increases in U.S. agricultural exports each year. In Nebraska, this increase in agricultural exports is expected to total about $125 million per year and add another 1,100 jobs to our State.

The benefits for my home State are not hard to see. In fact, they would be hard to miss. As the Nation's fourth largest exporter of feed grain and a key beef State, the U.S.-Korea agreement holds great opportunity and promise for Nebraska. It immediately eliminates duties on nearly two-thirds of U.S. agricultural exports to Korea. U.S. exports of corn for feed enter at zero duty—zero duty immediately. For the second largest corn State, that is a significant leveling of the playing field. And it phases out the 40-percent tariff on beef muscle meat and the 18-percent tariff on variety meats.

The Colombia agreement offers great opportunities to both manufacturing and the agricultural sector. Just one example: Nebraska manufactures and exports irrigation pivots to customers all over the world. Currently Colombia imposes a 15-percent duty on pivots, which would be eliminated by this trade agreement. This will allow Nebraska manufacturers to compete on a level playing field with European companies.

The Colombia agreement also eliminates barriers for many Nebraska agricultural products, including beef, corn, soybeans, pork, and wheat. In particular, the agreement immediately eliminates the 80-percent duty on some