

not expand it. We need to put in place a progrowth policy to allow the private sector to flourish.

That is why Republicans have been calling for years for comprehensive tax reform and for both parties to sit down and begin the process of reforming entitlements. That is how we will get our fiscal house in order and help the economy grow as well. But without Presidential leadership, it simply can't happen.

Controlling only one Chamber, Republicans in Congress can only do so much. The Republican-led House has passed budgets while, for 3½ years, the Democratic-led Senate has refused to do so. And they have passed 28 job-related bills over in the House that our Democratic friends here in the Senate refuse to take up. For our part, Senate Republicans will continue to pursue a pro-jobs agenda, and I encourage our Democratic friends to join us before the administration's spending and debt spree forces us into the sort of economic spiral we currently see facing folks over across the Atlantic. They can start by working with Republicans on our commonsense amendments to the farm bill.

The President may think the private sector is doing fine or that the government isn't big enough, but those in rural America are definitely not doing fine. The biggest threat to farmers in Kentucky and across America is this administration's job-killing regulations. That is why Republicans are calling for votes on commonsense amendments that would either eliminate or prevent future job-killing regulations from going into effect which would provide the necessary relief for American farmers and give a boost to rural America in these challenging economic times.

Last year, while visiting Atkinson, IL, the President blew off one farmer when he asked about policy regulations. The President said, "Don't always believe what you hear." Either the President doesn't know what his administration is doing or he doesn't want the American people to know it is his policies that are hurting farmers all across the country. It is either one or the other.

Here are a few examples of this administration's policies that are suffocating the American agricultural industry and the Republican amendments we want the Senate to take up.

Last fall, the Department of Labor attempted to regulate the relationship, believe it or not, shared between parents and their kids on family farms. The proposed rule would have prohibited those under age 16 from manual labor such as stall cleaning, using a shovel, and using a battery-operated screwdriver. Many people in my State consider this the type of manual labor that is widely referred to as Saturday morning chores. Senator THUNE is offering an amendment that would require the Department of Labor to consult with Congress before implementing such regulations.

The EPA wants to lift the ban that prevents Washington, DC, bureaucrats from regulating nonnavigable waters. The expanded Federal jurisdiction would bring the EPA and their redtape and taxes into the backyards of millions—literally millions—of Americans. The economic impact would be disastrous.

Congress passed a navigable ban to protect families, small businesses, and farmers from Washington bureaucrats trying to seize control of their water or their land. The U.S. Supreme Court twice affirmed the limits of Federal authority under the Clean Water Act. But, apparently, the EPA believes they are above the other two branches of government, and Senators PAUL and BARRASSO are offering two amendments that would stop the EPA in its tracks.

The EPA is considering a regulation that would require farm and ranch families to take as yet undefined measures to lower the amount of dust that occurs naturally—I am not kidding—lower the amount of dust that occurs naturally and is transmitted into the air due to agricultural production activities. It is hard to go through this and maintain one's composure. These activities include such things as combining, haying, moving cattle, tilling a field, or even driving down a gravel road. Failure to do so would result in a substantial fine. Senator JOHANNIS is offering an amendment that would prevent the EPA from issuing any new rule that regulates agricultural dust. I kid you not, they want to regulate agricultural dust.

Finally, Senator CRAPO and Senator JOHANNIS are offering an amendment that would help farmers across the country continue to manage their unique business risks associated with their day-to-day operations. The amendment would prevent unnecessarily diverting capital away from job creation and investing in their businesses in a way that was never intended by the sponsors of the Dodd-Frank Act. Preventing this unnecessary burden would promote economic growth, protect farmers and businesses, and ultimately help save American jobs.

In these extremely difficult economic times, rural America is already struggling to get by and it simply can't be bothered by an overreaching Federal Government that has literally no idea of the unintended consequences of its policies.

These five commonsense Republican amendments I have outlined, along with several others, put an end to numerous job-killing regulations, and each of these amendments deserves a vote.

I now wish to address another matter.

(The remarks of Mr. MCCONNELL and Mr. REID pertaining to the introduction of S.J. Res. 43 are printed in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

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

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I will take my time now and talk about a number of things.

JOB CREATION

The first thing I wish to mention is that my friend the Republican leader talked about the fact that the President has not done enough to create jobs.

Mr. President, we all have heard that longstanding joke—in fact, it was not a joke. I represented a young man who murdered his parents, and the joke during that period of time was, I guess now your defense is going to be that he is going to claim he is an orphan. There was nothing novel or new or unique in the experience I had representing that young man who had killed his parents, but the Republican leader's remarks remind me of that. He is saying that the problem with this country is President Obama. That is like the fact that someone kills their parents and then claims they are an orphan.

Republicans have blocked bill after bill after bill. These pieces of legislation have been suggested by, introduced by friends of President Obama. These were all job-creating bills, and simply every one of these, with rare exception, has been stopped on a procedural basis by the Republicans.

Then the Republican leader cites nonrelevant Republican amendments they would like to offer on the farm bill as ways to create jobs. But it is precisely these nonrelevant, non-germane amendments that keep the Senate from doing its work—its job-creating work—like the farm bill. The farm bill involves 16 million people who work doing farm programs. We have not done one in 5 years. The highway bill is something we are waiting for Republicans in the House to move with us on.

So I would just simply say that we live in a world that is imperfect. We live in a country that is imperfect. But let's give credit where credit is due. President Obama and this administration found themselves in a terribly deep hole when he was elected 3½ years ago. The administration he replaced lost more than 8 million jobs—about 1 million jobs a year in the prior administration. And President Obama has had 27 straight months of private sector job creation. So I think we deserve and he deserves some credit for the work he has done in that regard.

So I really strongly object to the Republican leader's remarks. It is just simply wrong. And if we had some cooperation from my friends on the other side of the aisle, as we say, we would have a lot more jobs created in this country. But my friend has said that his No. 1 issue is to defeat President Obama, and that is what has happened here. We simply have not been able to legislate appropriately because that is their mantra.

CYBERSECURITY

Mr. President, technology has changed our world, and that is an understatement. It has changed the way we shop, the way we bank, even the way we travel. It changes the way we get information, and that is an understatement, and the way we share it, and that is an understatement.

It was about 10 years ago or so that I decided to sell my home here in the suburbs, and I was stunned by one of my boys telling me: Hey, Dad, do you want to find out what other homes have been selling for around that area? Give me about a minute. And they pulled up on the computer every home in that area that had been sold in the last 2 years—when, how much.

There was even more detail than that. I was like: How do you do that? That was 10 years ago. That was in the Dark Ages with technology. There is so much that can be done now. Somebody can go online, go to Amazon, they can buy virtually anything in the world on that one Web site.

I met with someone a couple weeks ago who had gone to work with Google when they had 15 employees, and he talked to us about the tremendous problems they had starting this company. They wanted to give people information. I will not go into all the details, but it was very difficult to come up with the Google that now exists. It was not there when there were 15 employees.

They were working all night long trying to shut down computers and keep others going. So it is amazing what we have on the computer. Everyone can do it. Who wrote that song? What is the name of that play? What is the capital of Uzbekistan? Go to our BlackBerry. Go to whatever we have and get it in a second.

So the way we get information, the way we share it, has changed so dramatically. It has changed the way our country protects itself. That is not something people understand as well as Google and Amazon. But the way we protect our country has changed. It has changed the type of attacks we have to guard against.

Some of the top national security officials, including GEN Martin Dempsey, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, GEN David Petraeus, four-star general, now head of the CIA, one of America's great patriots, and Leon Panetta, Secretary of Defense, have all said that malicious cyber attacks are the most urgent threat to our country, not North Korea, not Iran, not Pakistan, not Afghanistan but cyber attacks. We have already seen some of these. They have been kind of quiet to some but not to those in the security field.

We have seen cyber attacks on our nuclear infrastructure, our Defense Department's most advanced weapons, and the stock exchange Nasdaq had an attack. Most major corporations have been attacked. They spend huge amounts of money protecting their

products or their operations from not collapsing because of cyber attacks.

Cyber attacks do not threaten only our national security, they threaten our economic security. These attacks cost our economy billions of dollars every year, millions of dollars every hour, and thousands of jobs. So we need to act quickly to pass legislation to make our Nation safer and protect American jobs.

The Defense Department, Department of Homeland Security, and experts from across the intelligence community have issued chilling warnings about the seriousness of this threat. I cannot stress enough how concerned people who understand security feel about this. Just a few days ago, Senator MCCONNELL and I received a letter from a remarkable bipartisan group of former national security officials, Democrats and Republicans.

The group includes six former Bush and Obama administration officials: Michael Chertoff, who has been a circuit court judge, judicial scholar, became head of the Department of Homeland Security during some very difficult times we had in this country; Paul Wolfowitz, who has been advising Presidents for decades; ADM Mike McConnell; GEN Michael Hayden; GEN James Cartwright, William Lynn, III. That is who signed the letter, and I could give a short dissertation on every one of these individuals about what they know about the security of our country.

The letter presented the danger in stark terms, as stark as I could ever imagine. This is a public letter. Listen to what this one paragraph says: "We carry the burden of knowing that 9/11 might have been averted with intelligence that existed at the time."

Listen to that. They are admitting 9/11 could have been averted with the tools we had at hand. They go on to say:

We do not want to be in the same position again when "cyber 9/11" hits—it is not a question of whether this will happen; it is a question of when.

This is not me saying this. This is General Hayden, who was the head of the CIA, briefing us many times about some of the most sensitive matters going on during the height of the Iraq war, Marine GEN James Cartwright, Defense Department expert William Lynn, III.

This eminent group called the threat of a cyber attack imminent. What does imminent mean? It means now. They said it "represents the most serious challenge to our national security since the onset of the nuclear age sixty years ago."

Let me reread that. They said it "represents the most serious challenge to our national security since the onset of the nuclear age sixty years ago." They said it; I did not. The letter noted that the top cybersecurity priority is safeguarding critical infrastructure: computer networks—we talked about those a little bit already. But computer

networks that control our electrical grid, our water supply, our sewers, our nuclear plants, energy pipelines, communication systems and financial systems and more.

Because of Senator MIKULSKI—she was the one who said this was important—we did this. We went down to this classified room. We had a briefing on an example of what would happen to New York City if they took down the computer system to run that State's electricity. It would be disastrous, not only for New York but for our country.

These vital networks must be required to meet minimum cybersecurity standards. That is what these prominent Americans believe, and so do I. The letter was clear that securing the infrastructure must be part of any cybersecurity legislation this Congress considers. I believe that also.

GEN Keith Alexander, Director of the National Security Agency, has said something very similar. This is what he wrote to Senator MCCAIN recently:

Critical infrastructure protection needs to be addressed in any cyber security legislation. The risk is simply too great considering the reality of our interconnected and interdependent world.

General Alexander is one voice among many. President Obama; the nonpartisan Center for Strategic and International Studies Commission on Cyber Security; the two Chairmen of the 9/11 Commission, Governor Kean and Congressman Hamilton; the Director of National Intelligence, General Clapper; the Director of the FBI, Robert Mueller, have all echoed a call to action—not sometime in the distant future but now. They believe the attack is imminent.

The attack may not be one that knocks down buildings, starts fires that we saw on 9/11, but it will be a different kind of attack, even more destructive. The entire national security establishment, including leading officials of the Bush and Obama administrations, civilian and military leaders, Republicans and Democrats, agree on the urgent need to protect this vital infrastructure.

That is only part of it. Yet some key Republicans continue to argue that we should do nothing to secure the critical infrastructure, that we should just focus on the military. When virtually every intelligence expert says we need to secure the systems that make the lights come on, inaction is not an option. A coalition of Democrats and Republicans, including the chairman of the Homeland Security Committee, Senator LIEBERMAN, and the ranking member, Senator COLLINS; the chairman of the Commerce Committee, Senator ROCKEFELLER—remember, Senator ROCKEFELLER was for years chairman of the Intelligence Committee and/or the ranking member; Senator FEINSTEIN, now the chair of the Intelligence Committee, have joined together and proposed one approach to address the problem. It is legislation. It is not something that is theoretical. It is not an issue paper. It is legislation.