

Tonight the President will talk about helping middle-class families, and Republicans are pleased to see the President pivoting back to middle-class concerns—something Republicans have never looked away from. We hope President Obama is serious about wanting to work with Republicans to address the challenges facing the middle class, but it is a little hard to take the President seriously when he is talking about helping middle-class families while simultaneously issuing veto threats for bills that would benefit them.

Within the past 2 weeks, the President has issued veto threats for two bills that would help create jobs for middle-class families—a bill to fix ObamaCare's 30-hour workweek provision, which is affecting employees' hours and wages, and a bill to approve the Keystone Pipeline. The House passed both of these bills earlier this month, and the Senate is currently in the process of considering the Keystone legislation. If it weren't for the President's veto threat, Keystone XL could be approved in the next few weeks, but thanks to the President, the future of the pipeline is still in doubt.

The Keystone XL Pipeline is supported by bipartisan majorities in both Houses of Congress. Six of the Senate Keystone bill's original sponsors are Democrats. The American people support the pipeline. Unions—a traditionally Democratic constituency—support the pipeline because their members want the jobs the pipeline would create. In fact, a number of unions sent letters just this month reiterating their support for the pipeline.

This is what James P. Hoffa, president of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, said:

The Teamsters Union continues to believe that the Keystone XL pipeline will contribute to enhanced energy security, economic prosperity, and, of critical importance, the creation of good-paying jobs.

Those aren't Republican talking points; that is a letter from James Hoffa, president of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters.

Edwin D. Hill, president of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, said something similar:

At a time when job creation should be a top priority, the Keystone XL Pipeline project will put Americans back to work and have ripple benefits throughout the economy. During construction the project is expected to support at least 42,000 jobs and contribute \$3.4 billion to the U.S. Gross Domestic Product.

Again, that is from Edwin D. Hill, president of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers.

Yet, despite all this support, President Obama is willing to turn his back on American workers to appease the only people who seem to oppose the pipeline; that is, members of the far-left environmental wing of the Democratic Party.

Over the years, the President has offered various excuses for why he is not yet ready to approve the pipeline. He

has cited environmental concerns. The only problem with that, of course, is that the President's own State Department has stated the project will have minimal impact on the environment. The President has also cited the court case over the pipeline's Nebraska route as a reason for waiting on the pipeline approval. Well, as of a week and a half ago that excuse is gone. The Nebraska Supreme Court has now upheld the pipeline's route. The administration responded by reiterating the President's veto threat.

President Obama has tried to minimize the impact of the pipeline delays by diminishing the importance of the jobs the pipeline would create. He has repeatedly mentioned that most of the jobs the pipeline would create would be temporary. Well, tell that to a construction worker who is looking for a job. Does the President oppose all infrastructure projects because some of the jobs they create are temporary? Or does he just oppose projects when the jobs they create are opposed by the fringe elements of his party?

The Keystone XL Pipeline will be a boon to our economy and to American workers. The President's own State Department has stated that the pipeline would support more than 42,000 jobs during construction and contribute \$3.4 billion to the economy. In my home State of South Dakota the pipeline will support 3,000 to 4,000 jobs during construction and generate over \$100 million in earnings, according to the President's State Department. These are not my figures. These are figures from the President's own State Department.

Keystone will bring in millions of dollars in State and local taxes for a host of local priorities—from schools to law enforcement to roads and bridges. In addition to providing jobs and generating revenue for State and local governments, the Keystone XL Pipeline will also help America's farmers get their goods to the market. Rail backlogs this fall left too many farmers struggling to ship their harvests. Keystone XL would help alleviate future backlogs by taking 100,000 barrels of North Dakota and Montana oil off the rails, which would free up substantial space for farmers and for other rail shippers.

Finally, the Keystone XL Pipeline will strengthen our energy security by reducing our dependence upon energy supplies from volatile countries. This increased energy security will also keep energy prices low for American families. Recent gas price reductions are largely due to increased North American energy development which has reduced our dependence on oil from countries such as Venezuela, Russia, and Iran. The Keystone XL Pipeline will help us continue to replace oil imports from volatile countries with our own oil and imports from our friend and ally Canada. That in turn will help keep American families' energy bills low. With energy bills accounting for

more than a quarter of after-tax income for families making less than \$30,000, lowering Americans' energy costs should be a priority.

It is time for the President of the United States to fish or cut bait. Approving the Keystone XL Pipeline should be a no-brainer. Republicans support it, Democrats support it, unions support it, and the American people support it. The pipeline would create jobs. It would increase revenue for local governments. It would strengthen our energy security, and it would do all of this—all of this—without spending a dime of taxpayer money.

President Obama can talk all he wants tonight about helping American workers and middle-class families, but it is his actions that will show whether he really means what he says.

If the President is serious about helping middle-class families, if he is serious about standing with American workers, then he will approve the Keystone XL bill when it gets to his desk.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. FLAKE). The Senator from Arkansas.

STATE OF THE UNION

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. President, tonight we will gather in the House Chamber to listen to the President's State of the Union Address. This will be the first time in Barack Obama's Presidency that he delivers a State of the Union Address to a Republican-led House and Senate. Some see this as a prescription for gridlock. Others, including myself, see this as an opportunity for the executive branch and the legislative branch to work together to actually get some things done. There is recent precedent that shows this arrangement can work. In fact, it is a period of our history where an Arkansan played a huge role.

During the final 6 years of Bill Clinton's Presidency, he faced the same situation as our current President. He worked with Republicans to reform the welfare system. He worked with Republicans to balance the budget—an accomplishment that hasn't been repeated since. He worked with Congress—not tried to go around them.

Now, I don't expect us to always agree. There are stark ideological differences between President Obama and our Republican majority for which there is really no agreement to be had without one side or the other abandoning their principles, and certainly I do not intend to do that. I don't see the President doing that either. What I do hope is that the President will find common ground with not only Congress but the American people. When that happens, work gets done here.

Even in the last Congress, with a Democratic majority in the Senate blocking almost everything in an effort to protect President Obama, we still had flashes of bipartisan agreement. We agreed on the new farm bill, which

ensures the continued safety, affordability, and reliability of our food supply while achieving real savings in Federal spending. We reformed the VA to address the horrific wait times our veterans face while trying to receive the health care they earned. And we passed a spending agreement that brings discretionary spending to its lowest level in almost a decade and has a number of provisions that adhere to conservative principles.

Both parties did not get everything they wanted in any of these instances, but the final product was the result of individuals coming from different starting points and arriving at the same finish line. That is what the American people want, but that takes an honest commitment from all parties involved.

One way the President can show he is really ready to work with Congress is to abandon his misguided plan to circumvent Congress and grant amnesty to millions of illegal immigrants. I anticipate that President Obama will try tonight, once again, to defend his actions by blaming Congress for not passing immigration reform. The truth is everyone in this Chamber is eager to tackle immigration reform.

The President is acting unilaterally because he knows Congress does not support his amnesty proposal. He knows the final product of our work will not include that provision. So he intends to go around Congress to get his way. Now the President seems intent to dig his heels in deeper by threatening to veto our efforts to defund his actions. This is just one of the veto threats President Obama has already issued just weeks into the new Congress. This start doesn't bode well for bipartisanship.

I hope tonight's speech is light on the veto threats and heavy on the areas where we can find common agreement. I think those are plentiful, and I sincerely believe it is possible.

A fair and simple tax system, creating jobs, and making Washington more efficient, effective and accountable—these are the issues that Americans want us to address and areas where compromise is possible. That is where our focus should be and what the country wants—not just what the President wants.

If everyone comes to the table ready to work, I think we can surprise everyone with what we can achieve. But it will take Presidential leadership. An Arkansan showed it can be done. President Obama should look to the example of President Clinton for how to move forward and to work with a Republican Congress.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

KEYSTONE XL PIPELINE ACT

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of S. 1, which the clerk will report.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 1) to approve the Keystone XL Pipeline.

Pending:

Murkowski amendment No. 2, in the nature of a substitute.

Markey/Baldwin amendment No. 13 (to amendment No. 2), to ensure that oil transported through the Keystone XL Pipeline into the United States is used to reduce U.S. dependence on Middle Eastern oil.

Portman/Shahen amendment No. 3 (to amendment No. 2), to promote energy efficiency.

Cantwell (for Franken) amendment No. 17 (to amendment No. 2), to require the use of iron, steel, and manufactured goods produced in the United States in the construction of the Keystone XL Pipeline and facilities.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, we are back on the bill before us, a measure that would allow for the permit to be approved to allow for construction of the Keystone XL Pipeline from Canada into the United States. We had good discussion last week, certainly on Friday.

We have several amendments that are pending before the body. The Senator from Massachusetts has one on oil exports, Senator PORTMAN on energy efficiency, and there is another measure sponsored by Senator FRANKEN relating to American steel. Obviously, it is important that we begin to process these amendments because we have a significant amount of interest in the issues in front of us. At this point in time there are—we had over 50 filed amendments as of Friday evening. As of this morning, we maybe have more on deck. There is clearly a great deal of interest not only on Keystone XL but other energy-related amendments as well.

As we work through finalizing the events for this afternoon, I would like to alert Members that we would like to have votes on at least the three pending amendments that are before us that I just mentioned, hopefully by midafternoon. We are aware the Senate will close early today because of the President's State of the Union this evening. So my hope is that we would be able to process these three.

It has come to our attention that Senator PORTMAN's amendment may need to be modified. He is in the process of doing that, and it may be that we will be able to accept that amendment this afternoon by voice vote.

At this point in time, I would encourage Members to come to us as the floor managers here, and let's figure out how we can get these amendments pending before the Senate. On the Republican side we have three folks who are queued up ready to offer theirs when it is appropriate. As we had agreed last week, we will go from side to side in terms of the amendments that will be considered. Hopefully this will be the beginning of a good, constructive week as we turn to regular order here in the Senate processing amendments.

With that, I would turn to my colleague on the energy committee, Senator CANTWELL, for any comments she might care to make.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, just to reiterate our opposition to this legislation, new polling has come out showing that the American public really does—over 60 percent—support going through a normal process and not subverting what are environmental laws. But we are going to move forward in getting this legislation voted on. My colleague just outlined a process for this afternoon. So I would encourage Members to come to the floor to offer their amendments. I know Senator FRANKEN is coming to speak on his amendment, and I see the Senator from Massachusetts here to speak on his amendment. So hopefully while they are speaking we can get a vote schedule firmed up and talk about other amendments besides the three we have pending. But I would agree with the Senator from Alaska that Members should come down here and talk on their amendments and we should keep the process moving.

With that, I am not sure who is queued up to speak.

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I believe the sponsor of this legislation, Senator HOEVEN, would like to address the Chamber for a few minutes this afternoon not only on the amendments that are pending but the bigger picture of Keystone XL.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

Ms. CANTWELL. May I inquire of the Senator from Alaska and Senator HOEVEN how long he intends to speak to make sure our colleague from Massachusetts knows he has his time before we get locked out for lunch?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. HOEVEN. Mr. President, my inquiry would be: How much time does the Senator from Massachusetts need? I would be willing to defer my time until later, as long as I know I would have approximately 10 minutes before the hard break of 12:30 p.m.

Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, I would think that if it is OK to allow the Senator from Massachusetts to proceed, knowing that our hard stop is 12:30 p.m., that at least—I would make this request: that both Senators be allowed to speak for 10 minutes, starting