

Well, I agree with that. Who wouldn't. But this is the same President who 22 times said he did not have the authority to issue an Executive action on immigration and then turned around and did it. Twenty-two times he said he didn't have the authority, and then he did it.

What I have learned in Washington is we can't just listen to what people say. We have to watch what they do. We have a track record of the past 6 years of what this President has done and not just what he has said.

As I say, the intransigence and the tone deafness was pretty shocking last night. Notwithstanding, the President gave a good speech. What I think the President really hadn't cracked the code on—as anybody in elected office has to understand—is that there is a difference between running for office and actually governing once the election is over. But this President seems to be in a perpetual campaign mode, making promises that sound like campaign promises rather than recognizing the reality of divided government and looking for opportunities to work together to actually solve problems.

So he is back on the campaign trail again. I think he is going to Idaho and other places around the country touting his new agenda—hundreds of billions of dollars in new taxes. Of course, somebody has to pay the bills, but the President mainly talked about free stuff last night. Free stuff is always pretty popular. I am surprised he didn't offer Americans free beer and pizza while he was at it. It is very popular.

But the American people are not dumb. They understand somebody is going to have to pay the bill, and the President ignored that entirely. He also ignored that for the past 6 years this President has added \$7 trillion to the national debt. It is now over \$18 trillion.

Now, I know that it is impossible for the human mind to wrap itself around a figure that big. That is so big that it is incomprehensible in many ways. But we didn't hear a thing about the President adding \$7 trillion to the national debt.

What he did take credit for—this is interesting because I have mentioned he takes credit for things he had nothing to do with and he blames other people for his own failures. But here is where he was half right. He did say that the deficit—the difference between the money we bring in and the money we spend—actually had gone down a little bit.

That is true, but the fact remains that we are still adding to the national debt for every dollar of deficit spending. But what the President also did not say is the main reason why the annual deficit had gone down was because he advocated one of the largest tax increases in recent history—perhaps in all of American history—during the fiscal cliff debate. Then, of course, there was the sequester, which are the caps put on discretionary spending, which

the President railed against even though he was the one who thought this up during the so-called supercommittee deliberations.

I couldn't help but think, as the President kept talking about raising taxes, increasing spending, and not dealing with problems such as the looming debt, that he was turning us more into Europe, a welfare state, where everybody would look to the government to take care of them, not a country that we were left by our parents and grandparents, where we could exercise our individual freedom and seek opportunities to rise above what we had been left by previous generations.

To me that is the most important difference in what the President said last night and what he might have said, because our children do deserve more opportunities. The truth is that for most of us who are people my age, we are going to be OK. But the fact is the next generation, my children and beyond, have been bequeathed more debt.

Now the President wants to add on to that debt—more taxes, more spending, bigger government.

If there was one thing that was rejected in this last election, it was what we have had for the past 6 years. What we have had for the past 6 years was a grand experiment in government. We have always had this debate about the size and the role of the Federal Government, but we have never had such an aggressive attempt to grow the size of the government in recent memory, certainly since the New Deal, as under the past 6 years. What the American people, I believe, rejected was this experiment in big government.

Perhaps that would be understandable if there weren't examples of what actually does work, what does grow the economy, what does put more money in hard-working taxpayers' pockets, and what does provide more jobs and opportunity. One reason why it seems somewhat obvious to me is because I see what has been done in places such as my home State of Texas, and it has been done in other States where they put their trust in people and not in bigger government that somebody has to pay for.

The formula is not all that unique. Governor Perry, who just left office after 14 years, when people talked about the "Texas miracle," said: No, it is not a miracle; a miracle is a supernatural event. This is the Texas model. It is a conscious effort to choose policies that actually work, that grow the economy and create jobs, lower taxes, and result in less red tape and a balanced budget.

Wouldn't that be nice? We haven't had a balanced budget in Washington since 2009. It is really malpractice.

There are other policies that would foster a better business environment and encourage businesses to invest and grow because that creates jobs, that creates rising wages and a successful

middle class. So the fact is that if it works in the States, it can work here too.

Now, measures such as reforming the Tax Code to provide tax relief in a way that incentivizes people to work harder and produce more are pro-growth tax policies—not regressive policies such as the President has proposed, which would make it harder.

Improving infrastructure projects—the President talked about infrastructure last night, but he has also issued a veto threat on the Keystone XL Pipeline. We are—I agree with the Senator from Wyoming—going to approve it, put it on his desk, and then it is up to him. Then, of course, there is putting Americans back to work and repealing oppressive government overreach—such as ObamaCare.

There is a difference between governing and campaigning. The President—there is no doubt about it—is a world class campaigner. He is right that he won two elections by running very successful campaigns, but he seems absolutely disinterested, detached, and, indeed, actually an obstacle to governing, which is the job in front of us.

In closing, I would say the state of the Union is always a work in progress, but it should always be improving. It is my sincere hope the President will realize the hand he has been dealt, which is one of divided government, and that rather than campaigning perpetually, making promises for free stuff, higher taxes, and bigger government, that he would work with us to solve some of the very clear challenges that confront us, primarily ones that will help grow our economy and put Americans back to work.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri.

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to be allowed to speak for 10 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

KEYSTONE XL PIPELINE

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. President, I thought last night, as the majority whip just mentioned, that the President once again showed his sense of why the majority in the Congress and the majority of people in the country support the Keystone XL Pipeline. It is not just about the pipeline, even though he doesn't quite seem ever to get that. It is about whether we are going to truly take advantage of more American energy.

Clearly, the President suggested that was one of the great accomplishments of his administration. I think we could make the argument—and make it effectively—that his administration hasn't done much to implement the great steps we have made forward. In fact, on public lands and other measures that we were in the process of considering when he became President,

they have backed away from that rather than stepped forward.

We seem to be unwilling to step forward and embrace this great opportunity that is so much more than the jobs for just the pipeline itself.

I filed two amendments today on the pipeline bill—the topic we are talking about, the topic my good friend from North Dakota has done so much to bring attention to since the day he arrived in the Senate.

It was 4 years ago, when the Keystone XL Pipeline application was only 2 years old at the time. Now 6 years later, we are continuing to miss an opportunity. It seems that on this topic, as once was said about seeking a solution to the Middle East, we can't seem to miss an opportunity to miss an opportunity.

But the two amendments I have filed deal with a couple of critical issues that relate to our energy future and our infrastructure future. One would be a community affordability amendment where we would have to have a study to look at the impact that all of these EPA regulations have on communities. These are EPA's unfunded mandates on communities, where they tell communities they have to do things but really don't give the community any idea how to pay for it.

The Presiding Officer and I are from two States that have many small communities. Those small communities often have a water system, a sewer system, and a storm water system, and the EPA comes in and says: Here is what we want you to do—maybe not with one of those, maybe with all of those—the air quality, the water quality.

I know the EPA has one regulation on water where the solution can't cost more than 2 percent of the median income over a specific period of time.

Now, 2 percent of your income, if you haven't been paying it for your water bill, your sewer bill or your whatever bill—2 percent of your income is taken right off the top of your income. It makes a difference to most families, but at least there is a cap there. But you can have that 2 percent on increasing the cost of the water system and another 2 or 4 or 5 percent on increasing the storm water system, and somebody has to pay those bills.

What this amendment does is suggest that we figure out who is paying those bills, what is a reasonable way to pay those bills, and how those bills can be paid. We know on the Senate floor, and the President knows, and the EAP knows who pays those bills and the people who have access to those services. There is no mythical payee here. The person who pays your utility bill is you, and if there is increased cost to the utility system, that comes to you. The person who pays your water bill is you.

So I believe we need to have a coordinated effort to see how those projects impact communities, impact families, and understand how this works.

So this amendment that I filed today directs the EPA to collaborate with the National Academy of Public Administration to review existing studies of costs associated with major EPA regulations. The amendment also directs the administration to determine how different localities can effectively fund these projects. The end result would be to come up with a working definition of a phrase they use a lot—individual and community affordability—but I can't find any evidence that this phrase—individual and community affordability—really means anything.

The amendment I filed today has already been endorsed by the U.S. Conference of Mayors, the National League of Cities, the National Association of Counties, and the chamber of commerce in my hometown, Springfield, MO.

The other amendment I am filing, submitted as a sense of the Senate, is that the President's U.S.-China greenhouse gas amendment would be looked at in a different way. This amendment is cosponsored by my colleague from Oklahoma, Senator INHOFE. It talks about the agreement negotiated between the President and the People's Republic of China and, in fact, says this agreement really has no force and effect because frankly, Mr. President, it already has no force and effect in China. Of the two parties the President says have agreed to this, we are the only one who would have to do anything. We think this is a bad idea—Senator INHOFE and I—and I think others will join us. It is a bad deal for our country, it is economically unfair, it is environmentally irresponsible, and once again it produces exactly the opposite result of what we would want.

First of all, I think the Constitution is pretty clear on agreements negotiated between countries. There is a Senate role to be played. It requires the advice and consent of the Senate. The Senate should insist we do that job. Whether it is here or on any other agreements with other countries, those agreements need to be consented to by the Senate. It happens to say that in the Constitution.

These agreements, under this amendment, also would have to be accompanied by actions that may be necessary to implement the agreement, including what it costs to implement. The amendment says the United States should not sign bilateral or other international agreements on greenhouse gases that will cause serious economic harm to the United States. It also says the United States should not agree to any bilateral or international agreement imposing unequal greenhouse gas commitments on the United States.

The reason I filed this amendment is simple. The agreement the President unilaterally negotiated with China and announced last November is a bad deal for workers and a bad deal for families, whether those workers are in Missouri or Arkansas or anywhere else in the country today. The agreement requires

the United States to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from 26 to 28 percent below the 2005 levels by 2025. It allows the Chinese to increase their emissions until 2030.

So last night the President said in his State of the Union Address that the United States will double the pace at which we cut carbon pollution and China committed for the first time to limiting their emissions. Well, let's be very frank about that. The President is actually right. He has agreed that we would double the pace, somewhere around 26 to 28 percent below the 2005 levels in the near term, but the Chinese have agreed actually to be allowed to increase their emissions for another 15 years and then they would consider—they would consider—reducing emissions after that. What this does is drive jobs and opportunity to China and other countries that care a lot less about what comes out of the smokestack than we do. We lose the jobs we otherwise would have had. We try to solve a global problem on our own even though we have made great strides already, some of which were cost-effective, but they get less cost-effective all the time.

I am grateful my colleagues allowed me to have a few extra minutes. I have filed these amendments, and we will be talking more about them and the Keystone XL Pipeline issue over the next few days. I look forward to having a vote on these amendments and the vote on the Keystone XL Pipeline.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The assistant Democratic leader.

MR. DURBIN. Mr. President, it is my understanding that we are in morning business and the minority is now entitled to 30 minutes.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is correct.

KEYSTONE XL PIPELINE

MR. DURBIN. Mr. President, I wish to speak in morning business on the pending issue on the floor, and I am glad my friend and colleague from North Dakota, Senator HOEVEN, is on the floor as well. Perhaps we can do something unprecedented and actually have a dialogue on the issue, if the Senator is open to that suggestion. After I make some opening remarks, I will try to request that through the Chair but only if the Senator is interested.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

MR. HOEVEN. Mr. President, I certainly would welcome that opportunity and look forward to joining the Senator from Illinois in that dialogue.

MR. DURBIN. I thank the Senator from North Dakota and warn him that we are getting perilously close to a Senate debate, which almost never happens. So we want to alert all the news bureaus that this might even turn into a debate on the floor of the Senate.