

are some good rules and regulations which are on the books today. The problem I have is with the bad rules that keep good people from going about their daily lives.

Unfortunately, there are too many of these bad rules that are hindering our freedoms and stifling our growth. These are the regulations which we should have a process in place to reexamine.

Today, I come to the floor to discuss bipartisan legislation, which we have already introduced, to permanently end regulation without representation. It takes a giant leap forward in restoring the people's role in the rulemaking process. After all, if the American people don't like the laws we make, they can vote us out, but they have no such power with unelected bureaucrats. They are stuck.

You see, the bipartisan legislation we have submitted, S. Con. Res. 17, would create a Joint Select Committee on Regulatory Reform, whose purpose includes reviewing regulations currently on the books and proposing a new rules review process that includes the elected representatives of the American people. It is rooted in South Dakota common sense and the principles that have made this country great, making government work for Americans, rather than against them.

Madam President, this committee would make several recommendations to Congress to rebalance this broken regulatory scheme.

First, the committee would be tasked with exploring options for Congress to review regulations written by agencies before they are enacted, providing much needed oversight through the possibility of a permanent joint rules review committee, which would be tasked with reviewing rules with a cost of \$50 million or more. This permanent joint rules review committee would have the ability to delay the imposition of these rules for not more than a year from the time the agency submits the rule for a review to enable Congress to act on the rule if they do not care for the rule.

Second, the committee would examine an option for agencies to submit each regulation with a \$50 million or more impact to the appropriate committees of Congress for review before the rule is enacted.

Finally, the joint select committee could recommend ways to reduce the financial burden regulations place on the economy as well as sunseting onerous and outdated ones.

This joint select committee would not be a permanent one, but it would be bipartisan, bicameral, and hold meaningful hearings so that a permanent solution to our overregulation problem can be properly addressed.

This legislation also offers a starting point for the committee by requiring certain possible solutions to our regulatory problem to be considered. I firmly believe that regulations should be reviewed by elected officials, those who

are accountable to the American people through the democratic process.

This is not a new concept. It is not rocket science. It is a common practice at the State level. In fact, 41 of the 50 States, including my home State of South Dakota, have a rules review process to make sure the executive branch is faithfully executing the laws they seek to implement.

It is worth repeating that regulations are estimated to cost \$1.88 trillion annually in the United States, and that is above and beyond the tax burden our citizens already share. That amounts to just under \$5 billion every single day, and it just doesn't make sense. It is unfair to those who still believe in and are working to achieve the American dream. Whether Americans are seeking to buy a car, take out a mortgage on a house, start a business, or see the doctor, regulations obstruct them.

When I think of those who sacrificed everything so that our children and grandchildren could create their own version of the American dream, I think about the freedoms and liberties they fought so bravely to defend. They fought so that we could pursue life, liberty, and happiness and trust that our government would not hinder these lifelong endeavors. It is not Washington that will continue to make this country great; rather, it is the collective spirit of individual Americans who want to work hard to be successful for their families and their communities. But they need the heavy hand of government to be lifted.

Here in Washington, it is not our job to dictate how Americans run their lives but to allow them to achieve their dreams, not make them into nightmares.

The phrase "Washington is broken" is far too common. It seems as though whenever we go home, there is someone who suggests that Washington is broken. We hear it regularly. People use it to describe the current state of our Federal Government. "Washington" is now used in a derogatory manner.

This city, the Capital of our Nation, named after our very first Commander in Chief, the man who led us to victory in the Revolutionary War and birthed this great Nation, has become, over time, the same as a four-letter word. Remember, George Washington left the Presidency voluntarily after two terms in office. He wanted to get away from the monarch style of government in which rulers held their positions for life. And now this city that bears his name is full of lifelong bureaucrats—and even worse, they are unaccountable to the people. It is a far cry from the Republic our Founders envisioned.

Madam President, in the year 2026 our country will celebrate its 250th birthday. That is just over a decade away. When we get to that point, I hope to join my fellow Americans in looking back with great pride in all we have accomplished and all we have to pass on to future generations.

President Kennedy challenged our Nation to put a man on the Moon be-

fore the decade of the 1960s had passed—less than 10 years. I am not asking us to do anything as tough as putting a man back on the Moon, but I think we should commit ourselves to removing the barrier of government regulations that is weighing on the American spirit and again set free the American economy before the decade preceding our 250th birthday.

I have not submitted legislation to start a new committee that exists in name and does no deed. Americans want us and expect us to be up to this challenge, and I believe we are. We can lift the heavy hand of government. The Founding Fathers did not anticipate thousands of regulators and a million regulations when they created this country. It is time to end this regulation without representation and restore the lawmaking process to the people.

I thank my friends on both sides of the aisle who have cosponsored RESTORE and encourage the rest of my colleagues to sign on to this common-sense approach to addressing the issue of overregulation so we can work to make this country even greater and safer than we found it. Then, during our 250th birthday celebration, we can be proud that we restored a little South Dakota and American common sense for our children and their children.

With that, Madam President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

#### CONGRATULATING SENATOR ROUNDS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, let me say to our colleague from South Dakota how much all of us enjoyed his first major speech and also congratulate him on focusing on what I think is the single biggest problem confronting our country, creating the slow growth rate we have had throughout the Obama Presidency.

The Senator from South Dakota has focused on the biggest drag on our economy, the single biggest thing holding this country back from reaching its potential, and I would say to my friend from South Dakota that he has picked the perfect subject and has laid out a good solution to it. I hope lots of colleagues on both sides of the aisle will rally around this excellent proposal as a good way forward in dealing with the single biggest domestic problem we have regarding the future growth of our country.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Dakota.

Mr. THUNE. Madam President, I, too, wish to congratulate my colleague from South Dakota, Senator ROUNDS, because he has already been a great leader on this subject. As a successful two-term Governor, a leader in our State legislature, he was a practical, commonsense, down-to-earth Governor who just liked to get things done.

I think coming here to Washington, DC, and finding the massive bureaucracy—in some cases, dysfunction—that surrounds this city, there can be a lot of disillusionment at times for people across the country. I think the new Senator from South Dakota is going to be a great voice, a clear voice on solutions for how to break through that. He will be a great partner and someone I look forward to continuing to work with. We worked together a lot during his time as Governor and while in the State legislature, but I am delighted he is here in the Senate, where he can take his skills and experience and the passion he has to bring about positive change for our country and put it to work on behalf of the people of South Dakota and the people of our country.

I look forward to working with him on the very issue he talked about today because there is probably nothing right now that has a greater economic impact and creates more economic harm for the people we represent in South Dakota than regulatory overreach. This is evidenced on an almost daily basis as new regulations emanate from various agencies around this town that make it more difficult and more expensive for people to create jobs, more difficult for farmers and ranchers and small business people to do the things they do best, and just create a higher burden, a higher level of harm for people across the State because everything that comes out of Washington, DC, that drives up the cost of doing business in this country gets passed on to consumers in our State and all across the country.

I congratulate the Senator from South Dakota on his remarks and am grateful for his great service to our State in so many ways already and now adding to that here as a Member of the Senate, where we have big problems, big challenges, but he meets that with not only big enthusiasm but big experience when it comes to knocking down these barriers and making it more possible for people in this country to live more prosperous lives, safer lives, and hopefully more fulfilled lives when they can get government out of the way and allow their greatest aspirations to surface.

So I hope we have the opportunity to deal with a lot of those issues and do it in a way that creates greater prosperity for people across South Dakota and across this country.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. INHOFE. Madam President, let me observe that after hearing all the Senator from South Dakota said and what his goals are, he sure chose the right committee, the committee I chair, the Environment and Public Works Committee. That is what we talk about. That is what we do.

I had the honor of being in South Dakota before the election, and as I walked around in South Dakota and looked around, I thought, I could just

as well be in Oklahoma. While I was there, I talked to the farm bureau people there, and they said it is the regulations. That is a farm State. Oklahoma is a farm State, and we understand that.

Of all the regulations they have and the problems they have, they say the EPA overregulates and causes the greatest problems. They singled one out—endangered species. They singled another one out—the waters of the United States. Currently, we are doing legislation on the waters of the United States, and it is legislation that is going to get that burden off of the people from South Dakota and Oklahoma. Right now, we are considering the most expensive of all the regulations, which is the ozone regulations. It would constitute the greatest single increase in expenditures or taxes of anything in the history of this country.

So it is nice to know we have someone who is so committed to the goals of this committee to be singling this out in a maiden speech as his greatest concern. I appreciate that as the chairman of that committee, and we are going to do wonderful things together for South Dakota, Oklahoma, and America.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. (Mr. TILLIS). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak in morning business for up to 15 minutes.

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

#### DROUGHT AND WILDFIRES

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, this afternoon I wish to call attention to the severe drought and wildfires that are already burning in my home State of Oregon and across the West.

Earlier today, the Energy and Natural Resources Committee, on which I serve, held a hearing on drought. There is no question that communities in many of our Western States are experiencing very uncertain times. Our farmers are concerned about water for their crops. Outdoorsmen and business owners fear low reservoir and river levels are going to ruin the summer season. Conservationists worry about a lack of cold water for fish habitats.

Drought and fire are a dangerous combination and create a trend continuing this year. Fire seasons have gotten drier. The fires have gotten hotter, and they have become far more expensive to fight. And severe drought is now compounding the crisis. We ought to make no mistake about what is going on in the West. The West is now bone dry, and the tragic fact is that

this is the new normal for Oregon farmers and ranchers. Water is an increasingly scarce and precious resource.

Right now, every last square mile of Oregon is experiencing abnormally dry conditions, and almost 70 percent of my State is under severe drought. Fifteen of Oregon's 36 counties have declared drought emergencies or have been declared a drought emergency by the Governor. The unusually warm winter in my home State meant record low snowpack, which devastates summertime runoff, which is so important to Oregon's water supply.

Drought raises enormous issues for communities and State and Federal agencies. They have to find ways to cope while using less water. Authorities feel they are in a position, or are forced into a position, to have to make seemingly impossible choices about where to dedicate increasingly scarce resources. All of these rural communities have to face challenges that are heightened by drought—particularly the threat of wildfires.

Drought conditions mean that western forests and grasslands are especially likely to go up in flames. It means that more acres will burn, more people and more structures will be at risk, and more funds are going to be needed to put the fires out.

Fire season this year has started earlier than normal. In fact, I received a fire briefing at home this March. That is the earliest I have had a fire briefing in all of my time in Congress. It certainly bodes badly for the extra costs that we are likely to see. I recently got a letter from the Forest Service with the estimate of anticipated wildfire suppression costs for fiscal year 2015. The middle-of-the-road estimate for how much it will cost to fight wildfires is nearly \$1.25 billion. On the high end, it could cost more than \$1.6 billion. But the funding, however, that has been dedicated to fighting fires does not come close—not close—to covering those costs. The appropriated amount is \$200 million less than even the most conservative median forecast. Wishful thinking in the budget is not going to be very useful in putting the fires out. Fighting fires costs money, and it can't be punted into the future like some minor budget line item. Once again, then, we are looking at the prospect of the Forest Service having to raid other accounts in order to put out the blazes.

According to the Forest Service, in 2013, \$40 million was essentially stolen from the National Forest Fund, which would pay for the stewardship and management of the 193 million acres of national forests and grasslands. And \$30 million was stolen from the account that funds the disposal of brush and other debris from timber operations. This brush and debris is essentially fuel for future fires.

Those figures represent the stark reality that the broken funding system in place is shortchanging the resources needed for sensibly fighting wildfires.