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Congressman Jason Smith's Capitol Report - The Strong State of Our Union

FEBRUARY 19TH 2018 BY DEE LOFLIN

Congressman Jason Smith's Capitol Report - The Strong State of Our Union

Congressman Smith Capitol Report The Strong State of Our Union February 2, 2018

Last Tuesday night? I was honored to join many of you in witnessing President Trump's very first State of the Union address to Congress. Leading up to the speech there were many things I thought the President could say, what he should say, and ultimately what he would say. But as I thought and reflected on the 12 months since President Trump entered the Oval Office, I realized that with the lowest level of unemployment in close to 20 years, an economy on the cusp of growing at rates never seen in my lifetime, and a strengthened military with ISIS on the run...that above all else, the state of our great union, was, for the first time in a long time, strong.

In 2017, we repealed regulations at a rate of 22:1 and saved American taxpayers more than four billion dollars. We passed historic tax cuts legislation that is just over one month old and already putting more money in Missourians' pockets. Just last week, I visited businesses in Dent and Texas counties where employers were handing out bonuses, increasing wages or strengthening their employee benefits as a direct result of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act. We put an end to the bad deals America was getting from rogue nations like Iran and North Korea. Our military members received the largest pay raise in 8 years and ISIS who started the year with more than 35,000 fighters in its ranks now has

less than 1,000. At the same time, we have made it clear that America stands united with her allies like Israel. ?

It is amazing the difference a change in administrations makes. After one year in office, the Trump presidency has led to the creation of 2.4 million new jobs, a growing economy and a cut in the unemployment rate from 4.8% to 4.1%. By sharp contrast, at the end of President Obama's first year in office we had lost 4 million jobs, the American economy was actually experiencing negative growth and the percent of unemployed Americans had risen up from 7.8% to almost 10%.

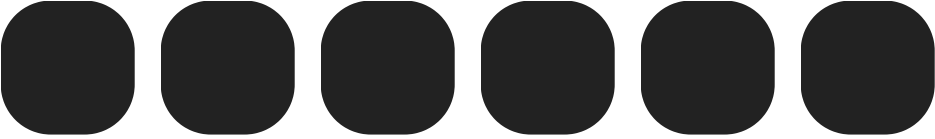
But the work is far from over. During his State of the Union address, the President outlined several major policy priorities for this year – policies that I am already hard at work on and ready to get done. The President mentioned things like increasing price transparency to lower the cost of prescription drugs and medical services, a major theme I heard during my healthcare roundtables last year. The President also discussed ending the tragic opioid epidemic, getting more Americans in the workforce by attaching work requirements to federal benefit recipients and ensuring your tax dollars fund only the most productive and qualified federal workers. These are all issues I have helped coauthor solutions to and advance in the House of Representatives. I remain hopeful the Senate obstructionists will soon see the value in tackling these important issues. In addition, the President mentioned investing in our country's infrastructure, making sure our federal assistance only goes to countries who actually support our priorities and securing our borders. These are all priorities for this year the President mentioned and are important matters which I have both publically and privately discussed with him.

As the President said, "The people dreamed this country. The people built this country. And it is the people who are making America great again." This is something we cannot forget as we work for the people and take care of the country we call home. There were many opportunities during the speech for my colleagues to stand and join with our President in what should be bipartisan efforts on behalf of all Americans. Sadly, we did not see much support from across the aisle. I hope they will realize that the agenda this President puts above all else isn't Republican and isn't Democrat. It is truly America First.

LAST UPDATED ON FEBRUARY 19TH 2018 BY DEE LOFLIN

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