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Congressman Jason Smith's Capitol Report - Friday, February 16, 2018

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Congressman Smith Capitol Report Putting Rural America First February 16, 2018

Rural America is roaring back. A recent report from the Department of Agriculture shows that for only the second time in the last century, we are actually increasing the number of farmers under the age of 35. With the President's leadership, we have been able to deliver tax cuts for American farmers, reduced federal regulations at a rate of 22:1, driven down energy prices and have grown the economy to bring jobs back to rural America.

Personally, I experienced this resurgence first hand during my annual farm tour last August. The tenor of the farms I visited changed from the previous year's visits – no longer was there a clamor to stop this regulation or slow down a new federal rule, more it was optimism for what a limited government approach in both Jefferson City and Washington DC would bring.

This past week, I was at the White House with President Trump where we discussed the priorities of rural America when it comes to negotiating fair deals for our farmers and rural based businesses. We talked specifically about ending unfair practices from foreign countries that are hurting the American worker. I told him about how some of these foreign practices aided in us losing our Aluminum smelter plant in New Madrid and with

it, 900 jobs. We discussed how with a stronger economy, a better tax code, fewer regulations, lower energy prices and new, fairer trade deals, we believe that we can bring back the domestic aluminum and steel industries and with it, jobs.

By sharp contrast, for eight years, I watched the Obama Administration wage a war on rural America. Seeing folks back home struggle under the crushing burden of Obama Administration rules and regulations is one of the reasons I ran for office. Obama gave us stringent overtime rules, tried to regulate kids working on their family farm, wanted to treat spilled cow milk like a leaking oil tanker and even tried to put federal mandates on every drop of water on a farmer's land. These rules were strangling locally-owned businesses and making it nearly impossible for folks to keep the doors open, the lights on and the cows fed. Despite these challenges, the work ethic of Missourians never faltered. In fact, they just fought harder to keep their businesses going.

It's incredible to now be working with a White House actually interested in strengthening the business climate here in the U.S. and improving the prospect of farming and our rural way of life back home. As a result of our tax cuts legislation, farmers have more money to invest in their fields and families, American workers are receiving larger paychecks, benefits and bonuses, and businesses large and small are looking to expand and grow here in the U.S. We've also made major progress on cutting Obama-era regulations. In fact, more than 1,500 regulations have been withdrawn completely or delayed. Regulatory repeals by Congress and the President will save Americans \$8.1 billion over their lifetimes, and more than \$9.8 billion is expected to be saved through regulations we are working to repeal in 2018. I am also working directly with the chairman of the Federal Communications Commission, Ajit Pai, to expand rural broadband across southeast and south central Missouri, an important advancement in order to improve the education and job prospects of today and tomorrow.

I am encouraged by the President's strong policies to ensure rural America stays open for business and helps Missourians thrive. His commitment to fight for fair deals on every front for American workers is amazing, and I'm proud to stand alongside him in the fight. Whether I'm holding a small business roundtable in Salem or Hillsboro, making stops on my listening tour in Jackson, Farmington or Poplar Bluff, traveling to farm operations in each of our 30 counties or hosting a rural broadband discussion with the Trump Administration in West Plains, I hear over and over again about just how much easier it is to operate a business or family farm with President Trump in office. While we have many more steps and actions to take, rural America is once again open for business.

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