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Jason Smith's Capitol Report - Six Unbelievable Months

JUNE 26TH 2018 BY DEE LOFLIN

Jason Smith's Capitol Report - Six Unbelievable Months

**Congressman Smith Capitol Report
Six Unbelievable Months
June 22, 2018**

Jobs are open, wages are up, unemployment is down, and Americans are optimistic about the future. The country has come a long way in the six months since President Trump signed historic tax cuts, which I was proud to send to his desk. The best is yet to come, but the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act is doing wonders for the pocketbooks and paychecks in Southern Missouri. That's because the new tax code prioritizes farmers, families, and workers first – removing the Washington roadblocks that have held them back from success for too long.

The status-quo tax code was punishing for the working families of Missouri and led to grim economic conditions. Stagnant wages, minimal growth, and a lack of jobs made it increasingly harder to make it in America. Hard working Southern Missouri farmers and families had to spend hundreds of hours a year just trying to figure out how much money to send to Washington. They weren't alone, 90 percent of taxpayers nationwide had to pay someone or use computer software to figure out their taxes for them under the old, unnecessarily complicated tax code.

The new tax code has completely flipped the priority from Washington-first to families and workers first. A family of four making up to \$55k doesn't owe any federal income taxes and can keep their hard-earned money instead of sending it to Washington. The expanded child tax credit Ivanka Trump and I helped write into the law makes it easier to support a family. And the Trump Administration will soon be rolling out new postcard-style 1040 forms so you can spend more time on the farm, with your family, or doing anything else other than figuring out your taxes.

Now that American businesses and workers can compete on the world stage, the results are going to keep coming in. Workers everywhere received pay raises in February when the IRS began withholding less money out of their paychecks because of the new tax law, and some businesses are taking it a step further. In Missouri we've seen businesses like Tyson Foods in Dexter reward employees with \$1,000 bonuses, or U.S. Bancorp with operations in Willow Springs announcing that 60,000 employees will receive bonuses and wage hikes. Across the country four million Americans have now received bonuses or wage hikes.

The long-term economic security and stability will allow businesses everywhere to invest in their employees and in our communities. Even President Obama publicly acknowledged the tax rates had to come down so America could compete, and with Donald Trump in the White House we finally have a President who is willing to do something about it. Two out of three jobs in this country come directly from a small business. Now that they have room to breathe, a million jobs have been created and there's now more jobs open than people looking for them.

As a result of all this, the economy is moving again and people everywhere are optimistic about their futures. I don't come from a wealthy family, so it means a great deal to me that the lowest-income households are increasingly more confident about their future and their chance to make it in America. This week it was reported food stamp enrollment fell to an eight-year low because people are finding quality jobs and a booming economy is lifting people out of poverty.

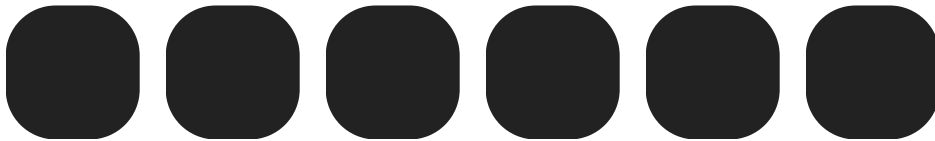
The new tax code is a historic win for Missouri and the country, but the work isn't over. The Senate's arcane filibuster rules narrowed the tax bill last year, so there's work to be done to fine tune the law to benefit Missouri's middle-class. When Ivanka and I worked on the tax bill we successfully included an expanded child tax credit for families, but it couldn't be permanent because of Senate procedure and obstruction. I've authored the Permanent Tax Relief for Working Families Act to make this credit permanent. While the House of Representatives voted to fully repeal the awful death tax, liberal Senators have

stopped the Senate from doing the same. I'm working with President Trump to repeal the estate tax that hits family farmers hard, because death should not be a taxable event. I want to know how the new tax code is working for you. Drop me a note at JasonSmith.House.Gov and let me know your take on the tax cuts, six months after President Trump signed them into law.

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Mike Kehoe to Serve as Lieutenant Governor of Missouri

JUNE 19TH 2018 BY DEE LOFLIN

Mike Kehoe to Serve as Lieutenant Governor of Missouri

Missouri GOP Statement on the Appointment of Mike Kehoe to Serve as Lieutenant Governor

Jefferson City, Missouri - The Missouri Republican Party released the following statement on Governor Parson's appointment of Senate Majority Floor Leader Mike Kehoe to serve as Lieutenant Governor:

"Having a qualified Lieutenant Governor is crucial for effective governance, and Governor Parson made the correct choice for Missouri in appointing Mike Kehoe to that position," said Chris Nuelle, a spokesperson for the Missouri Republican Party.

Nuelle continued, "Mike Kehoe's valuable experience as a small business owner, his push for meaningful reforms in the Missouri legislature, and his dedication to improving the lives of Missourians make him a great choice to aid Governor Parson in his mission to move Missouri forward. We look forward to working with him to enact quality legislation and bring conservative measures to Missouri."

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Congressman Smith Hosts Students from SEMO

Electric Co-op

JUNE 14TH 2018 BY DEE LOFLIN

Congressman Smith Hosts Students from SEMO Electric Co-op

Students participating in NRECA's Youth Tour joined Smith on Capitol Hill

Washington, D.C. - U.S. Representative Jason Smith (MO-08) hosted Missouri students participating in the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) Youth Tour in Washington, D.C. on Wednesday.

Twenty-eight students from Southern Missouri, including four from SEMO Electric Co-op, met Congressman Smith on the U.S. Capitol steps and asked him how their government works and the best methods to advocate for the causes they believe in.

“Advocacy from young folks like yourselves is so effective in having your voice heard,” said Congressman Smith. “I’m proud of each and every one of you already for making this trip to Washington to see your government first-hand and meet your representatives.”

Sponsored by SEMO Electric Co-op were Erin Polley from Bell City, Sydney Mayo from Bloomfield, Kalli Causey from Dexter, and Sierra Shirrell from Advance.

One student asked the Congressman what his favorite part of his job is.

“Whether it’s helping a veteran deal with a complicated government agency or making sure someone receives their Social Security benefits, being able to help Missouri families and make a positive impact in their lives is by far the best part of this job,” said Smith.

Congressman Smith has hosted NRECA’s Youth Tour participants every summer.

NRECA’s Youth Tour is a national, annual program where students apply and are selected to participate by their local electric cooperative. According to the NRECA, the purpose of the tour is for “students to gain a personal understanding of American history and their role as a citizen by meeting their Representative and Senators.”

More than 1,500 students across the United States take part in the NRECA Youth Tour each year.

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Blunt's Bipartisan Veteran PEER Act Signed Into Law

JUNE 14TH 2018 BY DEE LOFLIN

Blunt's Bipartisan Veteran PEER Act Signed Into Law

WASHINGTON, D.C. - U.S. Senator Roy Blunt (Mo.) today announced that his bipartisan Veteran Partners' Efforts to Enhance Reintegration (Veteran PEER) Act was signed into law as part of the VA Mission Act, which passed the Senate last month with overwhelming support. The Veteran PEER Act expands veterans' access to peer counseling specialists to better combat the risks of suicide and treat associated mental health conditions.

"Making sure veterans have access to timely, quality mental and behavioral health treatment is a top priority of mine," said Blunt. "Given their shared experience, peer specialists are uniquely qualified to help veterans overcome the challenges they face when

seeking mental health treatment, navigating the VA health system, and more. I'm glad to see this bill become law and I'll continue working to improve mental health treatment for our nation's veterans."

Blunt introduced the bill with Senator Richard Blumenthal (Conn.) in September 2017. Blunt discussed the legislation on the Senate floor last month.

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) currently employs peer specialists to assist veterans in treatment for mental health and substance abuse disorders. The VA was instructed by a 2012 Executive Order to hire and train 800 peer counselors by December 31, 2013, to treat the estimated 1.5 million veterans requiring mental health services.

The Veteran PEER Act expands veterans' access to peer specialist services by specifically targeting shortcomings in the current program, including peer specialists' restricted participation in primary care services; persistent stigma attached to seeking treatment for mental health disorders; and under-promoted proven successes of the peer specialist program in veteran reintegration.

The Veteran PEER Act:

Authorizes the VA to establish peer specialists in Patient Aligned Care Teams within VA medical centers to promote the use and integration of mental health and substance use treatment services in the primary care setting.

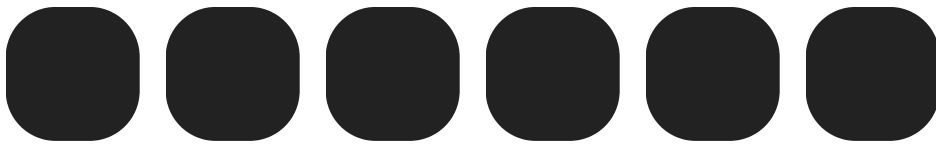
Implements the program in 30 locations across the nation over two years, with required consideration of rural and underserved areas when selecting program locations.

Requires regular reports to Congress with information on the benefits to veterans and their families derived from use of peer specialists.

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Congressman Jason Smith's Capitol Report - Leave When the Work's Done

JUNE 11TH 2018 BY DEE LOFLIN

Congressman Jason Smith's Capitol Report - Leave When the Work's Done

**Congressman Smith Capitol Report
Leave When the Work's Done
June 8, 2018**

It's about time the United States Senate calls the bluff of the obstructionist liberals in their ranks and gets serious about finishing the people's work. Just this week they took a step in the right direction by canceling Senators' traditional August break – doubling down on their efforts to confirm the President's nominees and get through the backlog of limited government, pro-growth pieces of legislation the U.S. House has passed over the last 18 months which have been stymied in the Senate. The House of Representatives has been more productive working with President Trump than with any of the last four administrations, but the Senate is setting records of its own for how long it takes to finish their work and the number of delay tactics being used to slow down President Trump's agenda.

Obstructionists use many road blocks, one of the most common methods Senators have used this Congress is forcing 'cloture' votes. This arcane filibuster procedure requires presidential nominees to clear a higher vote threshold to become confirmed. In the first two years of President Obama's first term, there were 12 cloture votes on his executive

and judicial nominees. So far, liberal Senators have forced more than 100 cloture votes on President Trump's nominees. Because of this, 183 of the president's nominees are still awaiting confirmation and key posts across the government remain unfilled more than 500 days into President Trump's first term. It's clear the obstructionists are more concerned with chewing up the clock instead of fulfilling their constitutional duty to confirm nominees, so let's give them more clock.

The United States Senate has become known as "the place where good bills go to die." Bills designed to help Missouri families and small businesses have been bogged down in the swamp of arcane procedures, delay tactics, and outright refusal to consider legislation from the people's House. In fact, 503 bills have been passed by the Republican House and are supported by President Trump, only to be ignored in the United States Senate.

Important work is sitting unfinished. Bills like the REINS Act, which will allow Congressional approval on any bureaucracy action that will cost the economy \$100 million more, remain passed by the House, supported by the president, but untouched by the U.S. Senate. My bill, the Searching for and Cutting Regulations that are Unnecessarily Burdensome (SCRUB) Act to get rid of outdated regulations, passed the House through regular order and the Senate hasn't done anything with it in 17 months. Important pro-life bills passed in the House of Representatives like the Born-Alive Survivors Protection Act, designed to end the disgusting, immoral practice of killing live infants who were able to survive abortion attempts haven't even been debated or given a committee hearing in the U.S. Senate. And the Senate refuses to vote on measures like national concealed carry reciprocity, despite more than 200 House members cosponsoring the bill and a majority voting to send it to the Senate last year.

I hope the legislative bottleneck in the Senate will ease up after the Senators stay in town for August, because the House is getting the people's work done. Working with President Trump, the House has passed more bills out of committee and out of the House than with any of the past four presidents at the beginning of their terms. Meanwhile the only records the Senate is breaking is the record of bills going there to die and record amount of time it takes to have vital nominees confirmed.

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