

party—have united to pass important groundbreaking legislation. On the issues that matter most—when lives are at stake, when the country and the economy of the country is at stake, when America's competitiveness is at stake—lawmakers, divided by political party, have been drawn together by shared priorities. It is time to renew that tradition.

Over the last 5 years, this Nation has dug its way out of the hole created by the great recession. I could go into reasons why the great recession happened, but let's drop that for now. It happened. We have an opportunity now to come together again, this time to lay the foundation for a stronger, smarter, and more competitive America.

As Democrats and Republicans came together in the past to ensure the health and dignity of our Nation's seniors, as Democrats and Republicans came together to pave the way for a mobile and competitive economy, so Democrats and Republicans today must come together to build a future where hard work is all it takes to turn opportunity into prosperity.

Yesterday President Obama laid out a roadmap to restore that promise for every American. The speech took an hour, but every minute of it was important. He laid out a vision to encourage responsible home ownership, to educate a new generation of workers, and to create jobs rebuilding Eisenhower-era roadways and bridges.

Every day I am impressed by President Obama's focus on restoring a vibrant economy. And every day I am encouraged by his optimism that with a little cooperation and the help of a few reasonable Republicans, we can achieve that goal. We only need a handful of Republicans to break away from what has gone on this past 5 years. I look forward to hearing more details from the President about his proposals in the coming days and weeks.

President Eisenhower understood that lawmakers—Republican or Democrat—should be drawn together by shared priorities. We should all play on the same team. This is what he said:

I have one yardstick by which I test every majority problem—and that yardstick is: Is it good for America?

General Eisenhower was right then and he is right today.

Throughout our Nation's history, Congress has used that same measure. But over the last 5 years, something has changed. When my Republican counterpart said his No. 1 goal was to defeat President Obama, the words "at any cost" were implied.

Since 2009, Republicans have refused to join Democrats in the important job of legislating. It has worked. They have refused to join us in leading, preferring instead to stake out ideological territory or try to score political points. Republicans have balked at new ideas. But they have also balked at old ideas they once supported, solely because those ideas are now favored by President Obama. This kind of opposi-

tion for opposition's sake has resulted in gridlock and dysfunction and bitter bipartisanship, hostage-taking and standoffs.

I was on a long interview on public broadcasting yesterday. They asked, What about the numbers of Congress being so low? I said, I haven't gotten a call from any of the pollsters, but if I had, I would agree with this number. Congress is dysfunctional, and that is unfair to the American people. It has made it almost impossible for Congress to advance the big ideas, to achieve the big things, to realize the big dreams it once could. But it is not too late for reasonable people from both parties and on both sides of the Capitol to change that. It is not too late for lawmakers, divided by political party but sharing the same priorities, to unite to pass important legislation.

Like President Obama, I am an optimist. I remain hopeful despite the disagreements and difficulties over the last 5 years. I am hopeful my Republican colleagues are using the same yardstick as I am. And I know they are asking themselves, as I am, Is it good for America?

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader is recognized.

WORKING WITH OTHERS

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, like the President, I appreciate a good literary reference every now and then. Placed in the proper context, a citation from some great writer or thinker can sum up a vision and inspire people.

When Douglas MacArthur bade farewell to West Point, he echoed an ancient thinker's ominous warning that "only the dead have seen the end of war." And the biblical references in JFK's famous inaugural address represent another classic use of the well-placed quote.

But I think a lot of people are still scratching their heads about President Obama's promise yesterday to bring Americans an "ocean of tomorrows." Frankly, I don't even think that Carl Sandburg fans out there would get it. I wonder: Does he? Because the President himself said his speech probably wouldn't change any minds.

Even the advisers who endlessly hyped this thing more or less conceded there wouldn't be any there—no groundbreaking proposals, no tack to the center, no promise to finally start working collaboratively with Congress. Well, they were right. So you have to ask, what was the point?

Look, this President is a terrific campaigner. We all recognize that. He has a way with words too. But at some point campaign season has to end and the working with others season has to begin. At some point you have to stop promising an ocean of tomorrows and

start actually working with the representatives of the people. Because, let's be perfectly clear, Americans aren't worried about how many tomorrows there are to come. They are worried about what those tomorrows will actually bring: the bills in tomorrow's mail, the cuts in tomorrow's paycheck, the affordability of tomorrow's health costs. These are the things that can't be addressed with reheated speeches or clever quotes. They require actually working with people, including those you might not always agree with.

For instance, going around telling people ObamaCare is working the way it is supposed to or that it is fabulous or wonderful, as several of our Democratic friends have done, doesn't change reality. It is just words. It doesn't change the fact that recent surveys show only 13 percent of Americans now believe the law will help them or that about half believe it will make things worse for the middle class or that actuaries are now predicting cost increases of 30 percent or more in my home State of Kentucky.

I know the President likes to point to the few places, as he did yesterday, where premiums might actually drop under ObamaCare, but he is basically silent on the places where it has been announced that premiums will go up under ObamaCare, and he will not say a word about all the people who have lost their jobs or seen their pay cut.

For instance, the Washington Post recently profiled a part-time college professor from Virginia who, like many in his situation, will see his hours slashed as a result of this law. As the Post put it:

For [this man], the President's health care law could have meant better health insurance. Instead, it produced a pay cut.

And, many would agree, not for the better, especially for the growing number of Americans forced into part-time work with fewer hours and smaller paychecks as a result.

One part-time waitress interviewed in another paper said:

I can't believe I voted for this. This is not the change I wanted, and it feels like there's no hope.

So if the President is ready to pivot from campaign mode to governing mode, he can start by dropping the misleading claims and admitting what pretty much everybody knows: that a lot of Americans are going to feel the pain once this ocean-full of tomorrows finally crashes ashore. Americans are worried, and I don't blame them.

Just last week, as I often do, I met with employers from around Kentucky who expressed continued concerns about the impact this law will have on their operations. They want the Democrats who run the Senate to follow the lead of the House in delaying ObamaCare for everyone, both businesses and individuals, and they know it makes sense to do so. I know they want the President to sign the bill when it passes, and I agree he should. It would be a great first step toward