

## Red Tape Keeps Economy Running on Empty

Written by Grassley Press  
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Getting the U.S. economy back on track can be achieved by unleashing America's "vibrant entrepreneurialism," according to the President. Taking him at his word, I agree the United States' free enterprise system has been "the greatest force for prosperity the world has ever known."

Yet, for the last two years, joblessness and deficits have climbed under the flawed theory that taking money away from the private sector grows jobs and creates wealth. In 2009, the White House threw taxpayers under the bus with a failed effort to spend tax dollars and boost the U.S. economy. The government stimulus package added hundreds of billions to the taxpayer's tab for what the President called shovel-ready projects that would save and create jobs and keep the unemployment rate below eight percent. Yet, today, nine-percent unemployment persists. And, an irresponsible pattern of reckless spending and excess has put the full faith and credit of the United States on the line.

Washington cannot borrow-and-spend our way to prosperity. It creates a chilling effect on the free enterprise system. Like a magician pulling a rabbit from a hat, it makes an illusion. The trouble is, the other hand is reaching for your wallet because government doesn't create wealth. It only consumes wealth. In the real world, we can't out-innovate, out-educate and out-build the rest of the world if we are drowning in debt. When the federal government borrows money, it siphons money out of the economy, crowding out affordable capital for start-ups and increasing the future burden on taxpayers.

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That's why it's so important to cut back on government spending, keep Washington living within its means and let the American people create, earn and enjoy their prosperity. Just after the new year began, and with a lot of fanfare, the President ordered a top-to-bottom regulatory review. He ordered every federal agency to examine the red tape that chokes job growth and stifles risk-takers. Just imagine if red tape were keeping the next American success story from launching a business, finding a cure or inventing the next-generation biofuel. Revenue-hungry policymakers need to appreciate that burdensome regulations shrink the economic pie, stunt job creation and harm U.S. competitiveness. Clearing the way for individuals and businesses to succeed and thrive will expand the economic pie and help Uncle Sam pay down the debt and pay the nation's bills.

The President's executive order sure sounded like a refreshing change. But six months later, scant progress seems to have been made to remove outdated regulations that make our economy less competitive. In fact, right after the President's order, officials at the Environmental Protection Agency were quoted in news stories stating that they were confident that none of the current or pending rules would need to be modified.

The attitude of the EPA makes it difficult to believe in the administration's ability to strike the proper balance between protecting public health and safety and protecting small business owners, farmers and entrepreneurs from burdensome regulations and paperwork. For years I've been fighting the EPA's proposed rule that would apply absurd federal regulations on the amount of field dust kicked up by a farmer's combine during the busy harvest season. The cost and inconvenience to a farmer to comply with such a ridiculous regulatory burden – not to mention the potential for a neighbor's lawsuit, should "coarse particulate matter" blow across the property line – is inconceivable. What's next? Malpractice insurance for farmers to protect against the risk of dust floating through the countryside during harvest?

Iowa farmers can be sure I will continue to try and knock some common sense into the EPA. It is possible. After an outcry, the EPA in April exempted dairy farmers from complying with a federal rule aimed at preventing oil from spilling into U.S. waterways. Sounds puzzling because it was a real head-scratcher. The EPA rule originally included milk containers under the "Oil Spill Prevention, Control and Countermeasure Rule."

Simplifying restrictive regulations would help refuel the U.S. economy without adding to the national debt. Thousands of rules infiltrate every nook and cranny of American life and commerce. Injecting common sense into the regulatory process can help wipe out job-killing rules that are preventing the U.S. economy from finding the on ramp.

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During the economic downturn, the Obama administration has issued hundreds of new rules that add even more uncertainty to job creators in the private sector with thousands more still in the pipeline to implement overhauls of the U.S. health care and financial systems.

Let's hope the President makes good on his call for a regulatory system that strikes a better balance between protecting the public good and promoting America's prosperity.

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