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REPUBLICAN MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES HOLD A
MEDIA AVAILABILITY FOLLOWING A CLOSED CAUCUS MEETING

July 23, 2013 Tuesday

EVENT DATE: July 23, 2013

TYPE: MEDIA AVAILABILITY

LOCATION: WASHINGTON, D.C.

SPEAKER: REPUBLICAN MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

WITNESSES:

REP. ERIC CANTOR, R-VA., HOUSE MAJORITY LEADER

REP. KEVIN MCCARTHY, R-CALIF., HOUSE MAJORITY WHIP

REP. CATHY MCMORRIS RODGERS, R-WASH., CHAIR, HOUSE REPUBLICAN CONFERENCE

REP. LYNN JENKINS, R-KAN., VICE CHAIR, HOUSE REPUBLICAN CONFERENCE

REP. DIANE BLACK, R-TENN.

TEXT:

BOEHNER: So, tomorrow the president says he's going to pivot back to jobs. Well, welcome to the conversation, Mr. President; we've never left it. We've been focused on jobs for the last two and a half years. Actually longer than that, but the two and a half years we've been the majority.

You know, if the president was serious about helping our economy he wouldn't give another speech, he'd reach out and actually work with us. Passing things like the Keystone pipeline would put tens of thousands of Americans back to work. If he'd work with us to delay ObamaCare and provide fairness to the American people; he's going to give big businesses a break, why not give individuals and families the same one-year delay?

Listen, he said he wouldn't shut down the government unless he gets more tax hikes instead of spending cuts. This is all about a big setup that's coming in this speech. The president wants to raise taxes so he can do more stimulus spending and the fact is, it's his sequester and if we're going to get rid of his sequester, we're going to have to look for smarter spending cuts in order to do that.

Listen, Republicans have been focused on jobs, we're going to continue to be focused on jobs but at the same time

we've got to have real fiscal responsibility. And so if we're going to replace the sequester, let's find the smarter cuts that we can all agree to.

CANTOR: Good morning. The president now yet again has announced his umpteenth pivot back to the issue of jobs and growth and the economy. And House Republicans have remained concentrated on job growth and better results for working families.

And I say to the president, you know what, actions speak louder than words. Another presidential speech is not going to help a mom or a dad who's out of work, who frankly needs some job training or needs some help to get back up on that ladder of success.

And it's House Republicans who have acted. You know, several months ago we passed the skills act. It's an issue that the president spoke about, about modernizing our worker training programs. He talked - he will talk in his speech about the need to train the workforce of the next generation. He could very easily pick up the phone and ask his senate colleagues to pick up our skills act. Let's pass it, let's do something for the working families and businesses of this country.

The problem is, the only thing that he has done is acted to continue to implement ObamaCare, which as we all know now is creating a part-time worker economy, not a full-time economy that can grow. So we ask the president to work with us, work with us on some of the things that we've passed, ask the senate to get into action so we can actually deliver results for the middle class that he now is going out to speak to, rather than act for.

MCCARTHY: We're all talking about the president's big speech and we know he has very nice backdrops to these speeches but there's no time for the new Roman columns. It's time for action.

There's simple things you do. Let's be very clear -- you do Keystone pipeline, you heard the leader talk about Skills Act sitting over in the Senate. You know what else he could do? He could use the power of the presidency to call the SEC to get the Jobs Act of 2012 implemented.

The Jobs Act that was done in the last congress isn't even implemented yet. So there's no need for more speeches; the time is for action and we'd rather see that and the American public would rather get back to work.

MCMORRIS RODGERS: Yes, so later on this week we're going to hear a series of speeches from the president as he says he's going to lay out his vision for an economy that puts the middle class front and center but the reality is, is when you pull back the curtain and when you really look at what's going on with our economy, people continue to struggle.

When I'm home, I talk to small business owners that are continuing to struggle over - because of uncertainty, a lot of it driven by the president's healthcare law. I talk to moms that are still struggling with rising food prices, rising gas prices and then we have college students that are facing these student loans increasing or the fact that some have graduated and they can't find a job; record high unemployment among our college grads.

What we need from the president is not just more speeches, we need him to join in this effort to really get down to business and work on these issues. There's a long list of issues that we believe would help create economic growth, spur the economy, create jobs, whether it's addressing the spending here in Washington, D.C., tax reform, the record number of regulations coming out of this administration, healthcare; the list is long. We want to join in working with the president, not just giving speeches.

JENKINS: When my daughter was little bitty, she went out for softball. Second practice, at the plate, she took her eye off the ball and got beamed right here. Glasses went flying, tears, everybody watching was in pain. Today, the American people are in pain because the president has taken his eye off the ball too many times.

The most important issue to American families today is a healthy economy and jobs and they're worried about

losing their job, they're worried their hours will be cut, they're worried they won't get a pay increase in the recent days and years ahead, they're worried about the rising cost of healthcare and Republicans in the House since we've taken control have remained laser focused on our jobs agenda, focusing on energy independence and Keystone, simplifying the tax code, controlling spending, reigning in the red tape, eliminating the unnecessary regulation.

I hope the president will start seriously considering many of these common sense solutions that we are pitching at him.

BLACK: As you know, the president is pivoting back again to jobs and the economy as has already been said and he'll be returning to Knox College tomorrow to deliver his economic speech at a time when the unemployment rate remains at a stubborn 7.6 percent and 11.8 million Americans are unemployed.

But this won't be the first time that the president has visited Knox College. In fact, in the summer of 2005, the president gave his first economic speech at Knox College and at that time the unemployment rate was 5 percent with 7.5 million workers unemployed.

I'm very interested to see what lessons that he has learned about job creation since his speech in 2005. And I join my colleagues here today in welcoming the president back to the conversation on jobs and the economy, a conversation that we have not left. And while the president's second term has largely been focused on appeasing his liberal base and crisis communications on government abuse and scandals, my House Republican colleagues and I have been working on pro-growth solutions to help our fellow Americans to get back to work.

Now, we have passed a responsible budget plan that would help our economy grow and would bring our books to balance. Instead, the president's approach - more red tape and regulations - have caused us to stop that growth. And we have advanced energy legislation as has been said that would expand our production, lower prices and help American businesses and workers.

While the president continues to move forward with his job- killing healthcare law, we have fought to repeal this legislative train wreck and to bring relief to our employers and families across our country. And I'm glad the president has decided to finally pivot back to the issue that is most important to the American people. And I urge him to get serious about working with us here in the House to grow our economy and to spur private sector job creation.

BOEHNER: Questions? (Jonathan)?

QUESTION: Last week, Ben Bernanke was on Capitol Hill and he said that the United States congress is the biggest threat to economic growth in this country. Do you see any responsibility for fiscal drag that's facing the country right now?

BOEHNER: Well, I think what the chairman is referring to is the fact that we've got spending that continues to be out of control, a red tape that's out of control, and if you look at what we've done over the two and a half years we've been the majority, we have focused on the issue of spending and the issue of red tape. It's getting in the way of our economy.

And we all know that we've got the issue of the debt ceiling coming up this fall. We're not going to raise the debt ceiling without real cuts in spending. It's as simple as that.

QUESTION: Mr. Speaker, the (inaudible) (intelligence) committee last night signaled mostly (inaudible) that they were signing on to this administration plan for Syria. Are you in alignment with Chairman Rogers and are you accepting how they're proceeding with this (inaudible) and how this (inaudible)?

BOEHNER: I think their effort to help the right set of rebels in Syria is in our nation's best interest.

QUESTION: Mr. Speaker, you've taken a hands-off approach on immigration. I wonder for fiscal issues of the (CR)

and the ...

BOEHNER: Whoa, stop, just stop. Stop. Let's get back to the premise of the question. Nobody's spent more time trying to fix a broken immigration system than I have. I talked about the day after the election and I've talked about it a hundred times since.

And while some may disagree about how we're going about fixing the broken immigration system, it's been a big goal of mine. Now, we believe that a common sense, step-by-step approach to addressing this problem makes a lot more sense than one big, massive comprehensive bill.

I expect that as we get into the fall, when we talk about the issue of spending - has there been anybody in the congress more focused on cutting spending than I have? I don't think so.

BOEHNER: Last question.

QUESTION: (Inaudible) dollars for dollar cuts (for) the debt ceiling?

BOEHNER: We need significant cuts in spending if we're going to replace the sequester and extend the debt limit. I believe that the so-called Boehner rule is the right formula for getting that done.

END

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