

Gov. Bob McDonnell's Response to President Barack Obama's 2010 State of the Union Address

Good evening. I'm **Bob McDonnell**. Eleven days ago I was honored to be sworn in as the 71st governor of Virginia.

I'm standing in the historic House Chamber of Virginia's Capitol, a building designed by Virginia's second governor, **Thomas Jefferson**.

It's not easy to follow the President of the United States. And my twin 18-year old boys have added to the pressure, by giving me exactly ten minutes to finish before they leave to go watch SportsCenter.

I'm joined by fellow Virginians to share a Republican perspective on how to best address the challenges facing our nation today.

We were encouraged to hear President Obama speak this evening about the need to create jobs.

All Americans should have the opportunity to find and keep meaningful work, and the dignity that comes with it.

Many of us here, and many of you watching, have family or friends who have lost their jobs.

1 in 10 American workers is unemployed. That is unacceptable.

Here in Virginia we have faced our highest unemployment rate in more than 25 years, and bringing new jobs and more opportunities to our citizens is the top priority of my administration.

Good government policy should spur economic growth, and strengthen the private sector's ability to create new jobs.

We must enact policies that promote entrepreneurship and innovation, so America can better compete with the world.

What government should not do is pile on more taxation, regulation, and litigation that kill jobs and hurt the middle class.

It was Thomas Jefferson who called for "A wise and frugal Government which shall leave men free to regulate their own pursuits of industry ...and shall not take from the mouth of labor the bread it has earned..." He was right.

Today, the federal government is simply trying to do too much.

Last year, we were told that massive new federal spending would create more jobs 'immediately' and hold unemployment below 8%.

In the past year, over three million Americans have lost their jobs, yet the Democratic Congress continues deficit spending, adding to the bureaucracy, and increasing the national debt on our children and grandchildren.

The amount of this debt is on pace to double in five years, and triple in ten. The federal debt is already over \$100,000 per household.

This is simply unsustainable. The President's partial freeze on discretionary spending is a laudable step, but a small one.

The circumstances of our time demand that we reconsider and restore the proper, limited role of government at every level.

Without reform, the excessive growth of government threatens our very liberty and prosperity.

In recent months, the American people have made clear that they want government leaders to listen and act on the issues most important to them.

We want results, not rhetoric. We want cooperation, not partisanship.

There is much common ground.

All Americans agree, we need a health care system that is affordable, accessible, and high quality.

But most Americans do not want to turn over the best medical care system in the world to the federal government.

Republicans in Congress have offered legislation to reform healthcare, without shifting Medicaid costs to the states, without cutting Medicare, and without raising your taxes.

We will do that by implementing common sense reforms, like letting families and businesses buy health insurance policies across state lines, and ending frivolous lawsuits against doctors and hospitals that drive up the cost of your healthcare.

And our solutions aren't thousand-page bills that no one has fully read, after being crafted behind closed doors with special interests.

In fact, many of our proposals are available online at solutions.gop.gov, and we welcome your ideas on Facebook and Twitter.

All Americans agree, this nation must become more energy independent and secure.

We are blessed here in America with vast natural resources, and we must use them all.

Advances in technology can unleash more natural gas, nuclear, wind, coal, and alternative energy to lower your utility bills.

Here in Virginia, we have the opportunity to be the first state on the East Coast to explore for and produce oil and natural gas offshore.

But this Administration's policies are delaying offshore production, hindering nuclear energy expansion, and seeking to impose job-killing cap and trade energy taxes.

Now is the time to adopt innovative energy policies that create jobs and lower energy prices.

All Americans agree, that a young person needs a world-class education to compete in the global economy. As a kid my dad told me, "Son, to get a good job, you need a good education." That's even more true today.

The President and I agree on expanding the number of high-quality charter schools, and rewarding teachers for excellent performance. More school choices for parents and students mean more accountability and greater achievement.

A child's educational opportunity should be determined by her intellect and work ethic, not by her zip code.

All Americans agree, we must maintain a strong national defense. The courage and success of our Armed Forces is allowing us to draw down troop levels in Iraq as that government is increasingly able to step up. My oldest daughter, Jeanine, was an Army platoon leader in Iraq, so I'm personally grateful for the service and the sacrifice of all of our men and women in uniform, and a grateful nation thanks them.

We applaud President Obama's decision to deploy 30,000 more troops to Afghanistan. We agree that victory there is a national security imperative. But we have serious concerns over recent steps the Administration has taken regarding suspected terrorists.

Americans were shocked on Christmas Day to learn of the attempted bombing of a flight to Detroit. This foreign terror suspect was given the same legal rights as a U.S. citizen, and immediately stopped providing critical intelligence.

As Senator-elect Scott Brown says, we should be spending taxpayer dollars to defeat terrorists, not to protect them.

Here at home government must help foster a society in which all our people can use their God-given talents in liberty to pursue the American Dream. Republicans know that government cannot guarantee individual outcomes, but we strongly believe that it must guarantee equality of opportunity for all.

That opportunity exists best in a democracy which promotes free enterprise, economic growth, strong families, and individual achievement.

Many Americans are concerned about this Administration's efforts to exert greater control over car companies, banks, energy and health care.

Over-regulating employers won't create more employment; overtaxing investors won't foster more investment.

Top-down one-size fits all decision making should not replace the personal choices of free people in a free market, nor undermine the proper role of state and local governments in our system of federalism. As our Founders clearly stated, and we Governors understand, government closest to the people governs best.

And no government program can replace the actions of caring Americans freely choosing to help one another. The Scriptures say "To whom much is given, much will be required." As the most generous and prosperous nation on Earth, it is heartwarming to see Americans giving much time and money to the people of Haiti. Thank you for your ongoing compassion.

Some people are afraid that America is no longer the great land of promise that she has always been. They should not be.

America will always blaze the trail of opportunity and prosperity.

America must always be a land where liberty and property are valued and respected, and innocent human life is protected.

Government should have this clear goal: Where opportunity is absent, we must create it. Where opportunity is limited, we must expand it. Where opportunity is unequal, we must make it open to everyone.

Our Founders pledged their lives, their fortunes and their sacred honor to create this nation.

Now, we should pledge as Democrats, Republicans and Independents--Americans all---to work together to leave this nation a better place than we found it.

God Bless you, and God Bless our great nation.